

# B U D D H I S M

AND ITS PLACE IN  
THE MENTAL LIFE OF MANKIND

BY

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## FOREWORD

THIS book makes no claims either of a philological or an æsthetic nature : it is to offer nothing but Buddhism. This, of course, does not mean that it is written only for Buddhists. Buddhism is the Doctrine of Actuality. Actuality is always actual, is always important and, in the last analysis, the only subject worthy of the actual thinker.

To offer something to this actual thinker, to assist him in the struggle against the all-overwhelming might of current thoughts and opinions, with such a high claim does this book appear before the world. What I myself have learnt and experienced as the most important thing of all, in this book I endeavour to pass on to others. I well know that those who understand are hard to find. But when has anything great ever been easy of attainment ?





# CONTENTS

✓ INTRODUCTION AND FIRST CHAPTER . . . . .	PAGE I
--	-----------

## SECOND CHAPTER

✓ • BUDDHISM AS HISTORICAL-SUPERHISTORICAL PHENOMENON .	16
---	----

## THIRD CHAPTER

CONCEPT AND OBJECT . . . . .	45
------------------------------	----

## FOURTH CHAPTER

THE CONSTITUENTS OF ACTUALITY . . . . .	70
---	----

## FIFTH CHAPTER

FAITH AND SCIENCE, AS FICTION AND HYPOTHESIS . . .	80
--	----

## SIXTH CHAPTER

THE CONCEPT . . . . .	98
-----------------------	----

## SEVENTH CHAPTER

✓ THE EGO . . . . .	116
---------------------	-----

## EIGHTH CHAPTER

NUTRITION AS LIVING EXPERIENCE . . . . .	124
--	-----

## NINTH CHAPTER

✓ THE FIVE GRASPING-GROUPS . . . . .	PAGE 129
--------------------------------------	-------------

## TENTH CHAPTER

CONSCIOUSNESS . . . . .	137
-------------------------	-----

## ELEVENTH CHAPTER

MIND-FORM AND CONSCIOUSNESS . . . . .	154
---------------------------------------	-----

## TWELFTH CHAPTER

DEPENDENT-SIMULTANEOUS ARISING . . . . .	162
--	-----

## THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

IGNORANCE . . . . .	168
---------------------	-----

## FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

RE-BIRTH . . . . .	189
--------------------	-----

## FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

✓ NIBBANA . . . . .	209
---------------------	-----

## SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

THE BUDDHA . . . . .	227
----------------------	-----

## SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

AVYĀKATAS AND DHĀTUS . . . . .	241
--------------------------------	-----

## INTRODUCTION AND FIRST CHAPTER

As every entrance by its nature is also an exit, so every good introduction to a book ought not only to introduce it but also to close it: it ought to be foreword and after-word in one.

• With none of my books yet have I felt the need of a closing word with such compelling necessity as with this book. With a clear conscience I can say before all the world: I have not written this book, but it has been forced out of me by that pressure of inner living experience which, like all living experience, seeks to comprehend itself, and, in comprehending, to take to itself a form.

This book is new country—from the first to the last line, I might almost say. Not as if it contained new ideas such as have not before been heard of! O no! What I offer is the Buddha-word, the pure, original Buddha-word. But the Doctrine, the Dhamma, is a germ, a ferment, with reference to which all depends on what it works upon, and to what extent it works upon it—whether it works merely on the upper surfaces where shine light and air, or whether it penetrates into the depths of the mother-soil.

So also with the noble doctrine, the Ariya-dhamma: all depends upon whether it only

germinates and ferments in the thin husk of the concepts, or whether it penetrates right into the marrow of life, and produces that mental fermentation which threatens the entire constituents of life, in which he whose fate it is to have to suffer \*it observes: Here there is no turning back! Here there is no standing still! Here there is only one thing—that perfect fulfilment which makes to come forth from the mass in this fermenting tub the clear wine of that assured knowledge which nevermore can be shaken by any new phenomena, near or far, inward or outward, because it has not sprung from phenomena but from living experience: it is the passing over from previous ignorance to new knowledge.

Speaking paradoxically, one might say: If there were no Buddhism, it would have to be invented. Without that which the Buddha offers the world as his gift to it, its mental life can never be complete, can never come to full mentalising, upon which in the final issue mental life solely depends. If mental life so squanders and misuses itself, that it burdens itself with ever new phenomena and objectivities, and ever anew puts its own mentality in question—in all this, in truth, it is not mental life, but only the endeavour after such. In order that mental life may in truth be that which it ought to be, namely, mental, it must have a purely mental object, something which is not in its mentality besmirched by objectivity.

In the ultimate analysis there are only two things: the world, Actuality, life, or whatever else one chooses to call it; and the knowledge of all this, consciousness. More there is not; and yet

this is not enough. The fact that mental life is present proves that ; for mental life, whether it present itself as religion, as science, as philosophy, or however else, is nothing but the unrelenting search for a mental life. Religion, ultimately, is nothing but the search for a religion, science nothing but the search for science, philosophy nothing but the ever repeated, ever unsuccessful search for such a thing. All mental life is hunger ! Satisfied only are the shallow !

Why all this ? Not because all these attempts have made a bad start, and can reckon upon success in the future (as the famous " Religion of the Future ", " Science of the Future ", and so forth), but because all these attempts are lacking in the object that is needed in order to guarantee mentality.

To the believer, God can become nothing more than a " certain hope ". Were God to assume a form, as once to Abraham in the grove of Mamre, or to Moses in the burning bush, he no longer would be God but a creature. Were the *Primum Movens* of Science to become intelligible, it no longer would remain a *Primum Movens*, but would, on its part, demand such a thing in order to derive from it its own motive force.

Thus does all mental life suffer from the impossibility of its own fulfilment ; not because it is impossibility of fulfilment in itself, but because that pure mental value is lacking which alone is the single valuable object of all mental life, and in its pure mentality *proves itself through itself*, inasmuch as there where it is present *as such*, as conceptual object, it is no longer present at all.

This single mental value which is proper to

mental life and guarantees to it its pure mentality is *ignorance about life itself*. Ignorance is the beginningless starting-point from which life, with all its joys and sorrows, with its truths and its errors, its living and its dying, ever and again springs forth as from some hidden source that never dries up, so long as it remains undiscovered. Herein precisely is proven its pure, object-free mentality, that it can be wholly and completely abrogated !

Discovered art thou, House-builder !  
No more shalt thou build up this house !

With this word of a victor did Gotama, now become the Buddha, the Awakened One, from the holy night at Uruvela come forth before the world from which he had torn its secret.

Thus is the Buddha—he who already during his lifetime was stigmatised as a denier, as a pessimist—in truth the final fulfiller of all mental life, he who created for mental life what it needed for the fulfilment of its true mentality—the *pure mental object*.

The contradiction herewith given is for the actual thinker the compelling force, the spur in the flank of his thinking, which nevermore will let him rest till all this is fulfilled.

Mentality and object mutually exclude each other. This is the contradiction which, as problem, can only be proven through itself.

This “through itself” (*paccattam*) is the guiding clue, the key-word to Buddhism. From it proceeds that most profound shock in which, as in a last struggle, it is to be decided whether, as hitherto has

always been the case, truth is to serve life, or whether, rather, in a hitherto unheard-of new order of things, life is to do service to truth.

Buddhism is no act of faith, and it is no scientific procedure of proof. It is drama, the unique, single, actual, moving drama of the struggle of truth with life, of life with truth. And that here it is question of a purely mental combat is proved through itself, inasmuch as the single prize of victory which remains in the hands of the victor in this fight is the No-more-ignorance—the sole palm of victory which Actuality has to bestow upon the thinker and seeker.

• As this actual drama I experience it. As this actual drama I have endeavoured to set it forth in this book ; not, however, as a drama which already has been fixed and settled by a skilled author, but as a drama which obtains its development only in being played. As such a drama let each accept it, otherwise he cannot do it justice : he cannot do justice either to it or to this effort to set it forth.

\* \* \* \* \*

About all these things of which I here treat I have already spoken in previous works ; but let no one use what is there said in order to convict me of contradicting myself. All is growth—Actuality, alike with the Teaching of Actuality. What I have said in my first works I now do not know, or only very imperfectly know ; for my repugnance to turning back to my past and inspecting my own footprints is wellnigh unconquerable. But this I know, that all the contradictions which may be pointed out between those earlier days and now can only be *apparent* contradictions. The line of

development is really an unbroken one. Thirty years is a long time. And when one has devoted them to the working out and realisation of a single idea, it is no wonder if the forms under which this idea is presented suffer change.

With the mere *conceptual* working out of all this, nothing is accomplished; that he notes most painfully to whom the necessity of living it out has become most clear. In its mere conceptual working out, Buddhism remains "Middle Doctrine" in the sense of an ambiguity which might be claimed for its own equally as well by Faith as by Science—an ambiguity by which (grasped in purely conceptual fashion) might be meant equally as well absolute reality as a mere play of relations. The concept cannot possibly sit in judgment there where it is itself the judged.

There are times with one—he who writes this has himself experienced it—when that which the Buddha points out and teaches seems easy and self-evident because one then takes over the Teaching (as also all other knowledge) in purely conceptual fashion, like a covered basket, and, like a covered basket, passes it on. It then seems easy because the standpoint stays steady from which it can be grasped as a pure object of comprehension, just like other teachings. What, after all, should there be so very difficult about understanding life as a non-selfness (*Anattatā*), and working it out in a logical manner! For this, nothing more is needed but between the metaphysics of Faith and the physics of Science to insert the intermediate category of the a-metaphysical (*An-attā*), and the thing is done. The *Middle Doctrine*, in purely



conceptual fashion, is there ; but with it also the ambiguity, the hanging to both sides.

The ease of understanding here rests entirely upon the shallowness of the standpoint. It is here as it might be with a man who in the boundless waste sees before him in the distance a point he wishes to reach. As long as he stands on level ground at an equal height with this point, the way thither will seem to him even and unbroken, and he will say : " The way there is simple, smooth, to be covered in such and such a time ". As soon, however, as he makes his standpoint higher, he will discover more and more clefts, abysses, dangers, and become more and more conscious of the difficulties of the undertaking which, if he actually makes the journey, he then also will experience.

So, at least, it has fared with him who writes this ! What, half a lifetime ago, he grasped as self-evident, for that he now has to wrestle, not because he has lost in understanding compared with earlier days, but because his standpoint has become a higher one, because all the clefts and abysses over which he formerly looked away as over a smooth path, now open before him and have to be crossed. And if he now concludes this book, this does not take place in any consciousness of having reached a real conclusion, but in the consciousness, experienced more strongly than ever, that the most difficult thing of all that here is to be done, the actual realisation of all this, still lies before him as his task.

But on the other hand, this work has produced more intensely than ever the conviction that between mere knowledge about life and life itself

there exists no cleavage ; but that, as mind and body are distinguished only as mind-force and its manifestation, as mind-force and its living expression, so also mere knowledge about life and life itself are distinguished only as the manifestation of mind-force and mind-force itself ; and that in the one already lies concealed the seeds of the other.

At this point, one or another critical mind may well say : “ What is the use of hewing this highway through the mental life of humanity ? Is that necessary in order to pave the way for Buddhism ? Cannot one grasp Buddhism simply through itself ? ” To be sure, one can grasp it through itself. A single renunciation, a single giving up, a single breath of really passionless quiet, and it is present, independent of whether all the paths of error trodden by Faith and Science are known as such or not. Far be it from me to estimate too highly, to overprize, this work of hewing out a road. What it means to myself, that I know very well. But on the other hand I must issue a warning against underprizing it. It is here as with a path through a jungle. All depends upon whether the path must first be traced out, or whether one comes upon it already completed. A path through the jungle in both cases ; for him who has made it with axe and knife, with hands and feet, and for him who only enjoys it along with him ! A path through the jungle for both ; for him who treads it first, and for him who follows after him ; and yet, how great the difference ! In short : In what one comes upon all ready prepared, one can never draw conclusions as to the amount of labour which its final construction has cost, or the steps leading up to this.

Accordingly, in this work I should like to recall the fact that the Buddha himself manifestly had also thought his way right through all the possibilities of the mental life of his time : the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, the first Discourse of the *Dīgha Nikāya*, shows that clearly. If *he* has done so, then such a labour must surely have its value. And for me that value consists in this—that I feel the, to me, clearly demonstrated impossibility of mere knowing (be it knowing in the rational sense of Science, be it knowing in the irrational sense of Faith) as the compelling impulsion, the obligation, growing ever stronger and stronger, to living realisation, and as the first germ of that living realisation itself. With others it may be otherwise : thus it is with me.

Here it is with me—to make use again of the simile used in the *Khandha Samyutta* (*Samyutta Nikāya* III. p. 131)—as with a garment fouled with stains that, cleansed of its stains, has still retained the evil smell of its fouled condition, which one feels all the more strongly and painfully now that the stains are removed, and thereby, as an all the more powerful compulsion towards final purification. In the very same way, if the great stains and befoulings of mere knowing and its aberrations are removed, the evil smell of failure in living realisation will be felt as all the more burdensome and painful, and impel all the more strongly towards final purification. Thinking goes as far as it can go, and ever and again presses out and away beyond itself.

Let each make of it the best he can make of it.

\* \* \* \* \*

As regards its classification from the outside, the work falls into three parts. The first part embraces *Buddhism as an historical phenomenon*—as which, however, it at the same time reveals its *superhistorical* character—in the condensed form entailed by my task. The second part embraces the exhibition of the *mental life of humanity*, not according to its contents—that does not come under consideration here—but solely with regard to its position towards Buddhism, when the entire domain (as respects its contents impossible to take in at one view) automatically, as it were, forms itself into certain figures, like the sand on a glass plate when the latter is stroked with a violin bow. The “orchestration” of the whole of mental life, here from the surpassing standpoint of the Buddha-word, runs its course automatically, in spontaneous fashion. From the standpoint of the “Middle Doctrine”, the whole takes shape in the two modes of apprehension, *Faith* on one side, and *Science* on the other; and under the three aspects, *Object*, *Subject*, and *Consciousness*, each of which again, on its part, can be worked out according to both modes of apprehension, thus yielding altogether a sixfold division.

As I have already said before, it is far from my intention to overprize such labours. I know well that a single impulse of renunciation, of inward quieting, is much, very much, more. And yet I believe that anyone who undertakes to set the Buddha-word before men can hardly help but think his way along such lines of thought himself. Otherwise he will not be able to meet questions. And if he is unable to meet questions, he will not

be able to expound the Doctrine in any satisfying fashion.

The third and last part embraces *Buddhism itself*, but this also not so much according to its contents as in its relation to the mental life of humanity.

I would wish that in what follows it might be granted me to set forth this insight offered by the Buddha—the deep, the hard to grasp, the flexible demanding complete flexibility, and which I myself see light up only in favoured moments—so that to the reader it may become, if not at once comprehensible, yet so far comprehensible that he catches a glimmering of what is contained therein: life *neither a metaphysical thing* (incomprehensibility, matter of faith), nor a physical (comprehensibility, matter of proof), but an *a-metaphysical*, Grasping itself, a mental process which has its sufficient cause neither in the metaphysical (God), nor in the physical (other life-processes, parents, etc.), but in itself. This “itself”, however, is not to be taken in the sense of a life-identity, but in the sense of an ignorance about oneself, a process which is liable to come to an end, and awaits the moment of coming to an end; a process which keeps itself going by ever and again laying anew, in the form of new graspings, the bridge which it breaks down behind it, like the flame which maintains itself by laying anew in front of it the bridge which it breaks down behind it: life is no traveller who journeys on upon his way to the distant homeland, but a *way which arises through being trodden*. And the way is just this transition, perpetually carrying itself on from consciousness to mind-form, from

mind-form to consciousness, from mind-force to its manifestation, from the manifestation of mind-force to mind-force itself ; and the sufficient cause of this interplay is insufficient cognition in the play of the transition—Ignorance !

I know quite well that all this sounds rather enigmatic, but let the reader be patient. What up till now he has not understood, he will be able to understand when he has read the book through to the end, and when he has grasped the fact that Grasping is the only activity in the world, and that there is only one actual object (one “ standing against ”) of this Grasping : the bodily form conventionally called personality. That this latter is *the* object in dependence upon which Grasping exists, and at the same time is that which exists in dependence upon Grasping—to understand this, to realise it, to live it out, this in the deepest sense means Buddhism.

From this self-involving character of the Teaching proceeds the necessity for repetitions. The Buddha’s whole life was nothing but a unique monotony, one single great note, the setting forth of the Teaching ever and again in new repetitions which present one and the same thing from ever new standpoints, and which, for him who faces Buddhism and tries to master it with conceptual thinking, are often nothing but a series of offences, nay, deadly sins, against the holy spirit of logic with its laws of identity and contradiction.

From this standpoint Buddhism has often enough been submitted to the well-known “ thoughtful ” criticism of philologists of higher or lower standing. And worse than this : So-called Buddh-

ists have tried to make it conformable to logic, tried to turn it into an object of mere logic, into an "absolute comprehensibility". He who has understood the Buddha laughs at all such more or less well-meant, more or less learned, jests. But also, he alone who has understood him understands the possibility of, and the impulsion towards, such caricatures.

Let us, for example, take the word in which the character of Buddhism is best mirrored, the word in which the Anattā doctrine most truly is represented, the word *Sankhāra*. I do not know how many years I have lain on watch to find the correct translation of this word. All my trouble was in vain; and my first step forward was this, that it became clear to me that its correct translation would remain impossible so long as I had not myself fully understood what is meant by Sankhāras; and that my incapacity for an adequate translation, clearly proved by the necessity for making different translations, was caused only by a lack of understanding of the meaning of the word.

So long as this understanding is not present, there is something altogether confusing in following up the use of this word in the Suttas. Its first application is found in the case of the *Five Khandhas*, the *Five Groups*, where, together with Form, Sensation, Perception, and Consciousness, it makes up the whole of personality. Here Consciousness (Viññāna) is the end-phase as regards the Sankhāras. On the other hand, in the Twelve-linked Chain, the *Patīccasamuppāda*, the Sankhāras precede Viññāna, and then follow it again as *Nāma-rūpa* (mind-form), which latter is just a collective

name for the four first Khandhas, and again also contains the Sankhāras. And, further, in the other, the ten-linked form of the *Patīccasamuppāda*, mind-form and consciousness, and thereby the Sankhāras and Consciousness, are brought into the relationship of mutual dependence. And still further to complete the confusion, all the Five Groups, all the Five Khandhas themselves again are Sankhāras; Form is a Sankhāra; Sensation, Perception, the Sankhāras themselves, Consciousness—all are again Sankhāras.

Thus, who shall find his way here where no word any longer retains a permanently graspable meaning, and one thing flows into the other—for conceptual thinking, a hopeless case! The scientist exclaims: “Contradictions without end! The man lacks logical training! The poor attempts of a tyro which we with our ‘thoughtful criticism’ and editing must prop up so that something enjoyable may come of them. Apparently different mental layers and deposits afterwards cobbled together; and it rests with us, the philologists, to lay bare these several strata and reveal them as such.”

Here also I say: The man who understands laughs at such jests. And the only thing that can be adduced in excuse for them is this, that they were already current in the Buddha’s day, when, as the *Great Sutta of the Lion-roar* informs us, Sunakkhatta the Licchavi called the Buddha’s Teaching stuff flung together in cogitation by him, the Buddha, with which, in common phrase, no dog could be enticed behind the stove. And if this could happen in the Buddha’s own time, what shall one say to the philologists of to-day? Here we have



no other resource but ourselves to experience all this ; and then we shall observe that the apparent contradiction which the Buddha offers is nothing but Actuality lived out as such. And if I am asked, *What is Buddhism ?* I have only one reply : *The Doctrine of Actuality.*

## SECOND CHAPTER

### BUDDHISM AS HISTORICAL-SUPERHISTORICAL PHENOMENON

ALL mental life concerns (a) scientific knowledge, as physics and so forth, and mental science (philosophy), (b) behaviour, as moral teaching (ethics), (c) presentiment, as that which aims beyond this life (religion). Science, morality, religion, are the questions: 1. *What* is life? 2. *How* ought we to conduct ourselves therein? 3. *Whither* proceeds the life-journey, *i.e.* what may we expect after death? In these three questions ultimately is embraced all mental life. In this "*What? How? Whither?*" it puts its first questions. And in this "*What? How? Whither?*" it will have its last answers as science, as morality, and as religion.

The best proof that, in the sense of a final, real answer, we have no science, no morality, no religion, is, that of all these things we have dozens of different kinds. One science attacks the others and tosses them aside, only in turn to be itself tossed aside by a new science; one moral teaching attacks the others; one religion attacks the others. In the last analysis we have nothing but ever and again new processes of development, essays of a scientific, moral, religious character, to all of which clings this

fatal after-taste, that among them all one does not know if they are going in the direction of a definite goal, *i.e.* whether they are moving in a continually ascending line, or whether they are moving, if not in a circle, yet after the fashion of a spiral in which, like a railway train that rises to higher levels by several windings, they ever and again come back to the old point on a new plane, but in doing so have no means of judging whether in the interval the journey has proceeded in an upward or in a downward direction.

In the last half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century, for example, science has again taken up the purely materialistic line of thought of the atomistic philosophy of a Demokritus, to be sure, from a new plane. The mental world, in the course of these more than two thousand years, has not turned in a circle, but completed a spiral winding. But who is going to assure us that with the new plane from which we now are working out the atomic doctrine we have screwed ourselves up to a higher level? It might equally well be that we have screwed ourselves downwards. An actual standard of measurement situated outside the world-mass by which we could make a test, a sort of epistemological North Pole, we do not possess; the only standard of measurement is our own imaginings.

It is of course true that by means of the atomistic-mechanistic mode of envisaging natural events we have made the acquaintance of an endless number of facts which otherwise we should not have known. But facts are of value only as symptoms. As such they are capable of many

different interpretations. And gradually, more and more, and ever more assuredly, we notice that along with this tremendous growth outwardly there goes hand in hand a miserable stunting and impoverishment inwardly, so that, even if we only stand still for a minute and draw breath, we must admit to ourselves that we have made a bad bargain, and that the idea that in these two thousand years we have screwed our way up round a spiral winding rests upon a decidedly weak foundation.

Beliefs in Church and Bible which, after all, during the predominance of the mechanico-materialistic school of science, best held their ground in the, of itself, assured and wholesomely beneficial position of an indignant opposition, now that science begins to extend itself beyond its mechanico-materialistic phase into a new mystical phase, are falling into serious danger, in that an enemy to them is now growing up against which they can no longer hold out and take a high tone with the strength of opposition, namely, modern astrology, with which latter the mental life of humanity has completed a new spiral turn, and in it again reached the same point at which the Chaldaic wisdom of the stars left it two thousand years ago. To be sure, here also we stand upon a new plane of facts. But of what importance are all these new facts, armed with which we apply ourselves to astrology, in face of the fundamental, central question as to whether the destiny of mankind is directed by a higher, omnipotent, omniscient being, by a "God in heaven", or whether it depends upon, and is determined by, Jupiter and

Saturn? The entire, immense abundance of new facts which we possess in advance of the Chaldean interpreters of the stars of four thousand years ago furnishes no standard by which to judge whether in this spiral movement, in which we have again reached the old point upon a new plane, we have screwed ourselves upwards or downwards. Whether the step-by-step elimination and paralysing of the God-idea, its replacing by sun, moon, and stars, is progress or regress, ascent or descent, who is in a position to judge? There is no outside standard of measurement available. The sole standard of measurement is our imaginings; and these are no standard of measurement for the actual thinker, for he well notes that here measure and measured, or, better expressed, measure and what is to be measured, are one.

For the actual thinker there are no firmly established dogmas and axioms something after this kind: "Here is a world, consequently there must be a higher being who has created it"; or, "Here is my conscience, consequently here there must be a being endowed with a soul that is the standard of measurement for good and bad"; or, "There is transiency, consequently there must be something eternal, for otherwise we could know nothing of transiency." All these are dogmas which suffer from the fundamental defect of all dogmas, that we do not at all know the fundamental concepts with which we are working except when we ourselves first lay them down, as, for example, in mathematics. As to whether the fact that there is a world necessitates the dogma of a creator—about this we can say nothing until we know what is "the world".

As to whether the fact "conscience" necessitates the dogma of an ensouled "I"—about this we can say nothing until we know what is "conscience". As to whether the fact of transiency necessitates the dogma of a something eternal—about this we can say nothing until we know what is "transiency". But we do not know what "world", what "conscience", what "transiency", is. In order to know all this, we must have a standpoint outside all this; and there is no such thing. In all attempts to lay down the law on these matters, we do our measuring with the very thing that is to be measured, *i.e.* we remain in the realm of our imaginings. And to sum up briefly all that has been said on this head: The entire mental life of mankind in its current meaning as science, morality, and religion resembles a ship on the ocean that drifts about without helm, without compass, without proper Pole, and of the goal of its journey knows no more than this, that there ought to be a "goal", something like a man who, to use a Buddhist simile, loves "the most beautiful lady in the land", without knowing in the least who this most beautiful lady is, or where she is to be found.

That Buddhism occupies a peculiar position within this fluctuating movement commonly called "*the mental life of humanity*", is abundantly clear simply from the fact that people cannot quite make up their minds as to where lies its place within this mental life. Does it lie within the domain of science, *i.e.* is it a mere philosophy? Or does it lie within the field of ethics, *i.e.* is it a mere moral doctrine? Or does it lie within the sphere of teaching about the future, *i.e.* is it a mere religion?

Upon these questions opinions waver continually this way and that, and one arrives at this result, another at that, on the ground of proofs that for the individual concerned are absolutely binding and conclusive.

The incontestable historical fact is that Buddhism has exercised a tremendous influence over the mental life of humanity, at once in its breadth and in its depth. The greatest body of land of the globe, the continent of Asia, owes its stamp, its particular character, to it. Asia, even still to-day, is the "Buddhist continent". The other great religions, Confucianism in the east, Hinduism in the south, Islam in the south-west, Christianity in the west, in comparison with this colossus have remained border religions.

If now we trace out the course of development of all these religious entities, set up, so to speak, a religious statics and dynamics, the noteworthy fact emerges that Confucianism and Hinduism show themselves to be static structures, since the former has remained confined entirely to China, the latter entirely to India. These two religions hold their ground each within its own domain. On the other hand, the three other religions, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, prove themselves dynamic structures, *i.e.* structures endowed with a certain power of expansion and impact, which of themselves are impelled towards dissemination among all mankind, and thereby mark themselves out as "world-religions", in which latter conception what matters is not actual diffusion and number of adherents, but the germinating force resident within a religion. Confucianism and Hinduism, notwith-

standing that the adherents of each number somewhere about three hundred millions, still to-day are not world-religions ; while Christianity, for example, was already a world-religion when the narrow domain round about the Sea of Galilee was as yet all the world it knew.

If one seeks to assign Buddhism its place in the mental life of mankind, it may be carried out from this standpoint. It is a *world-religion*: that is to say, exactly like its two rivals, Christianity and Islam, it lays claim to conceal within itself a germ, a quality, of value and significance to the whole of mankind. This purely external, historical mode of marking it out as a world-religion is the way in which Buddhism can be assigned its place within the mental life of mankind.

But it is clear that this way of assigning it its place alone is not enough ; for, regarded in merely external, historical fashion, Buddhism would be no world-religion like the two others, but a past, a dethroned world-religion. He, the greatest son of Asia, in the wide lap of his mother, of a truth has hardly a spot where to lay his head. Only a few shreds on the margin of the continent, Ceylon, Burma, Siam, can to-day rightly be denominated Buddhist countries. India itself and the whole of Central Asia are lost to Buddhism. And Eastern Asia, with its huge swarms of men, still breathes to-day of the noble odour of the Teaching of Gotama the Buddha, but the Teaching itself has passed into the form of Mahayana, that is to say, of the "Great Vehicle", also called "Northern Buddhism", an amalgamation with other religions in which its best, its essential character, has been



lost. To be sure, something durable has been left, something that has substance, and can offer something positive to men: *Amitābha*, the *Boundless Glory*, and the *Paradise in the West*, for the human spirit hungering after the eternal, longing to get away from the transient, are certainly gifts not to be despised. But that which in truth and actuality belongs to the *Buddha*, to the *Awakened One*, is of thereby completely lost, and, as I have already said, nothing remains but the noble odour of a great memory, which lives on in certain phrases, in certain names and ideas, above all, in the precious idea of *Bodhisattva-hood*.

From this two things follow. First: If one designates Buddhism a world-religion, along with this its universality it must have a special application. And in the second place: Mahayana Buddhism, for our treatment here, which occupies itself exclusively with pure, unadulterated, undiluted Buddhism, does not come under consideration.

This pure, original Buddha-word, as it is laid down in the Pali Canon, in a certain conventional fashion is often alluded to as *Hinayana*, as the *Little Vehicle*. This designation naturally does not originate with the Buddha himself, but it illuminates, condensed into one word, the most characteristic feature of Buddhism as marked out in its doctrine of Deliverance, and as rendered again in the word *paccattam*, "through oneself", "out of oneself"—a doctrine that has a value which is purely individual, personal, confined to the "I", and thereby bears the character of the immediate, of a living process. How far, then, and with what right, the true teaching of Gotama

Buddha deserves to be called "Little Vehicle", each may be left to live out for himself.

Already of itself this one word *paccattam* shows that in Buddhism what matters is not the extensive but the intensive, not breadth but depth, not the multitude and mass of mere facts but the immediate of the living process. And so it comes about that in Buddhism, notwithstanding that, if conventionally one reckons China, Japan, and certain parts of the farther Asia as belonging to it, is still today, statistically, the richest in adherents of the three world-religions, and notwithstanding that in to-day it has become the fashion, and got into salons and village schools, it in truth is by far the most limited of the world-religions; and that its claim to such a leading place among religions rests not upon the number of its adherents and the magnitude of the geographical areas belonging to it, but upon the inexhaustible, ever-living germinating force of the possibilities lying within it, which perhaps, precisely at the present time, in consequence of the pressure from without, due to the impact of the two other world-religions, have been condensed to the utmost degree possible. If one contemplates the mental life of mankind as exhibited at present, more especially, after the world-war, in hundreds and thousands of efforts,—this restless, at bottom, continually unsatisfied search, this astonishing, nay, fearfully near approach to actual truth, to true Actuality—one would think that it only needs the removal of a last prejudice, the blowing away of a final cobweb, in order to have the mental life of mankind, in so far as it is not fast bound by a robust Faith, flow over in a

broad stream into the Buddhist doctrine of Actuality. And when, notwithstanding, nothing of all this apparently near-lying possibility occurs, when nothing increases but the restlessness and distraction of the search, even though the way is there that leads to peace, to assurance, to final insight, one is forced in reason to ask : What is the cause of this ? Whereupon the answer comes : The cause lies in Buddhism itself, in its character as a pure doctrine of Actuality, which proves itself such through the fact that it does not stand outside that which it teaches, *i.e.* outside Actuality, and now from this necessarily fictitious standpoint step up to Actuality, make it its " subject ", but instead, itself dissolves into that which it teaches, namely, into Actuality, and thereby retains that character of immediacy which no longer leaves any room whatever for a mental movement with reference to Actuality, but peremptorily and unyieldingly demands the immediacy of the living experience, a demand which neither to-day nor ever before has suited human thinking, and a demand to which thought in the days of the Buddha opposed itself perhaps quite as much as the thought of our present time. That saying of the Buddha, " Those who understand are hard to find (*aññātaro dullabhā*) " has held good through all time, and will hold good through all time.

With this we come face to face with the question :  
*What is Buddhism ?*

The preliminary answer we shall give to the question, *What is Buddhism ?* will lie in saying what it is not. A philosophy in the sense of an epistemological system which furnishes a complete

reply to the question of the *What*, of the *What is life?*—this it is not. The Buddha himself ever and again calls his Doctrine *attakkāvacara*, that is to say, not lying within the domain of *takka*, of reasoning, of conceptual thinking; but here it is not in the least meant that Buddhism does not recognise at all, and does not stand in need of, logical thinking. Here, as in all the other departments of mental life, the logical functions are recognised, used, and required. But they are used in order at the same time to show their conditioned, provisional value, their dependence upon an antecedent condition. Buddhism makes use of the concepts; but it is at the same time the executioner of the concept.

Again: A moral teaching in the ordinary sense, as a teaching which teaches a definitely held good and a definitely held evil, Buddhism is not. The Buddha himself says to his Bhikkhus in the 22nd Discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya: “*Right things (dhammā) you have to give up; how much more the not right (a-dhammā)!*” He distinguishes between a good deed, a bad deed, a deed neither good nor bad, and a deed which leads to the ceasing of all deed, good as well as bad. As the Dhammapada (verse 126) teaches: Evil-doers go downwards to unhappy states of existence (*niraya*); well-doers go upwards to happy states of existence (*sagga-loka*); and those perfect in insight and thereby free from all impulsion towards evil as towards good (*arahan*), are finally extinguished (*parinibbanti*).

Hence, as regards morality, taking the word in its conventional sense, Buddhism comes with empty hands. Where, as in all other departments of mental

life is the case, the highest knowledge and the highest morality,\* the question as to the *What* and the question as to the *How*, ought to coincide in a final unity, there, in place of this great union which men desire and anticipate in the far-away of an eternal, sinless, blessed existence called by many various names, there results a great falling short which leaves nothing in the hands of the searcher, and causes him to ask in astonishment and doubt: "This surely cannot be the goal?" Instead of the answer to the question as to the final *What* and the final *How*, we get the withdrawal of the antecedent condition from which alone these questions receive sense and meaning, the withdrawal of the *I*-identity as the conceptual bearer of a positive knowledge and a positive morality.

With this, sentence of condemnation is passed upon Buddhism also as religion. Religion in the ordinary sense, as that which points beyond this life to one essentially different, it cannot be. The Buddha himself says in the 38th Discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya: "If ye so know, so penetrate, will ye then run back into the past (with the question), 'Have we veritably been in past time?' Will ye then run forward into the future (with the question), 'Shall we veritably be in future time?'" and so on.

• Consequently it is no wonder that new doubts are perpetually emerging as to the correct classification of Buddhism. The mental life of mankind, in the ordinary sense, knows nothing but science, morality, and religion; and what comes under its hands must be fitted into one or another of these three drawers. If an insight, a teaching, belongs

in none of the three, why, then, one just tries to provide a place for it in all three ; for somewhere or other it must be provided with a place ! And these endeavours will continue as long as one has not become clear as to what in truth Buddhism really is.

The historical representative of Buddhahood, the Buddha Gotama, was a native of the city of Kapilavatthu, situated on the extreme northern edge of the Indian peninsula, close to the borders of Nepal, in the shadow, as it were, of the giant mountains of the Himalayas. He belonged to the noble race of the Sakyas who ruled over Kapilavatthu. His personal name was Siddhattha, and his family name Gotama, on which account he is always alluded to in the Texts as *Ascetic Gotama* (*Samana Gotama*). His father's name was Suddhodana, his mother's Māya. He indeed speaks of them as his parents, but does not mention their names. The like is the case with his wife, of whom in the great parting scene he does not even make mention. He alludes by name only to his son Rahula, who later on entered the Order founded by himself.

What Gotama tells about himself as a man is not much. What he gives is only the course of his development into the Buddha in which his whole nature as a man was completely swallowed up ; and this he gives in the solemn-formal, arabesque-like style of the Discourses. But under the solemn seriousness of these forms, ever repeating themselves, there burns the glow of vivid life, so that, after one such narration of his manner of life with its superhuman struggles, expressed in acts

of self-mortification surpassing all measure (*Great Sutta of the Lion-roar*, Majjhima Nikāya 12), his then supporter, the venerable Nāgasamāla, breaks out into the words : “ Astonishing, Lord ! Wonderful, Lord ! With the hearing of this discourse, Lord, my hair has stood on end ! ”

In the *Discourse of the Noble Striving* (Majjhima Nikāya 26), and in other places, he tells of himself how, “ Young and strong, black-haired, in all the beauty of youth, in early manhood’s years, against the wishes of parents weeping and lamenting, I had hair and beard shorn off and put on the yellow robe of the monk. Out from home I withdrew into homelessness, on the search after ‘ What is good ? ’ (*kiṃ kusala gavesī*), looking for the incomparable way to the highest peace.”

This happened, as he tells us in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta, in the thirtieth year of his age. “ One year of thirty I still lacked, Subhadda, when I left the world seeking my weal ; and full fifty years have flown, Subhadda, since I chose the homeless life as a farer in the realm of the Right Doctrine.”

In the course of his search he reaches Uruvela, near modern Buddha Gaya, and there begins his ascetic exercises.

Gotama was not what we call an infant prodigy. The thirtieth year of life, under the glowing sun of India, is already the culminating period of existence, yea, perhaps already on the decline from that period. But with unexampled vehemence Gotama now grasps the nature of his task, and in a struggle which disregards everything else he plunges into those depths of asceticism in which he was wellnigh

overwhelmed, and which in the end could only produce for him this *one* item of knowledge: *This is the height of torment: aught beyond this is impossible. This cannot be the right way!* He takes nourishment, and the body that had nearly burnt out in the glow of asceticism has now become the instrument capable of re-echoing the grand chord of Deliverance. And straight onward it burns, onward to the holy night of Uruvela! Gotama the Bodhisatta blossoms out into the Buddha, into the Awakened One! After the storm of asceticism, the peace of Deliverance! And the knowledge, the insight arose: "Unshakable is my deliverance. This is my last birth! No more is there re-birth!"

But to whom should he make known this teaching of getting rid of passion, this doctrine of ceasing, of extinguishing? Who will be capable of understanding this doctrine, "the still, the high"? Where should he find the vessel worthy to receive these precious contents?

His two teachers, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka, Rāma's son, are both dead. But the five monks who, during his period of asceticism, had faith in him, are alive. He sees that they are the vessel worthy to receive the teaching. He also sees "with the heavenly eye, the purified, the super-human", that they are now staying at Isipatana in the Deer Park at Benares, and betakes himself upon the journey thither. After long efforts he succeeds in convincing the five. The monk Kondañña is the first to understand. "Truly, Kondañña has understood! Truly, Kondañña has understood!" These are the words with which the new Buddha-drama entered the world—



a religion of Knowledge in contrast to all other religions of Faith. After an endlessly long travail, the birth! The drama of Uruvela finds its sequel in the drama of Isipatana. The teaching, the Dhamma, by the road of sufferings surpassing all human imagination, by the road of Bodhisatta-hood, blossoms out into Bodhi, gains a footing, kindles into Humanity. The "Wheel of the Teaching (*dharmacakkaṃ*)" is again set rolling! Again once more is the Tathagata career accomplished.

Born in the Lumbini Grove near Kapilavasthu, becoming the Buddha, the Awakened One, in Uruvela, coming forth for the first time as teacher, as turner of the Wheel of Teaching in Isipatana, dying in Kusināra, in the Sāla Grove of the Mallas in his eightieth year—these are the four decisive points in the life-career of this most extraordinary of all men. Within this span, from his thirtieth year onward, a life of ceaseless teaching and journeying within the borders of the sacred Middle Land, which according to ancient tradition has the first right to the promulgation of the Doctrine, because in it, also according to ancient tradition, lies latent the greatest possibility of the understanding of the Doctrine. It is by no mere accident that the Buddha appears in this focus, in the most sacred domain of Indian spiritual life. He makes his appearance here because he must make his appearance here, because here all the antecedent conditions for his appearing are offered, or rather, ever and again offer themselves anew.

"These are the four places, Ananda, for one full of trust, for one nobly born, that are worthy of being visited, that move to awe. Which Four?"

‘ Here the Accomplished One (Tathāgata) was born ’, this, Ananda, for one full of trust, for one nobly born, is a place that is worthy of being visited, that moves to awe. ‘ Here the Accomplished One has fully awakened with the incomparable Perfect Awakening ’, this, Ananda, for one full of trust, for one nobly born, is a place that is worthy of being visited, that moves to awe. ‘ Here the Accomplished One has set rolling the incomparable Wheel of the Doctrine ’, this, Ananda, for one full of trust, for one nobly born, is a place that is worthy of being visited, that moves to awe. ‘ Here the Accomplished One has been completely extinguished in that mode of extinguishing which leaves nothing whatever behind (*anupādisesa-nibbāna-dhātu*) ’, this, Ananda, for one full of trust, for one nobly born, is a place worthy of being visited, that moves to awe ” (Dīgha Nikāya and Anguttara Nikāya, Book of Fours).

Thus much concerning Buddhism as an historical phenomenon.

From the purely doctrinal point of view, Buddhism presents itself as a collection of precepts, discourses, and treatises, which have been gathered together, and have come down to us, under the name of the Triple Basket (Tipitaka).

The Three Baskets, *i.e.* the three fundamental divisions of the Buddhist Canon, are: 1. The Vinaya Pitaka; 2. The Sutta Pitaka; and 3. The Abhidhamma Pitaka.

The Vinaya Pitaka, the Book of Discipline, the moral prescriptions, falls into five sections, of which the Mahavagga (“ The Great Chapter ”), and the Cullavagga (“ The Little Chapter ”), are the most

important. Both contain as main features the Rules of the Order, and amplifications of these rules. Here, ever and again, is repeated the same scheme: On such and such an occasion such and such a monk has done something against the regulations, whereupon the Buddha gives out a Rule bearing upon the same.

According to tradition, the Vinaya Pitaka was evolved only twenty years after the laying down of the Doctrine. Until then the general prescriptions held good, such as the Dhammapada, verse 183, sets forth:

The ceasing from all evil-doing,  
Continued exertion in well-doing,  
The purification of one's own thinking—  
This is what every Buddha teaches.

And

Forbearance and humility are the highest form of  
austerity.

Nibbana is the highest good, so the Buddhas say.

He is not a homeless one who hurts others.

He is not an ascetic who injures others.

*(Na hi pabbajito parūpaghātī, na samano hoti  
param vihethayanto.)*

That is to say: In the beginning the Doctrine was that pure teaching which taught abstention from violence as regards others (Ahimsa), and final release from existence (Vimutti) as regards oneself, in short, humanity in its purity and perfection.

The second book of the Triple Basket, the Sutta Pitaka, the Book of Discourses, is by far the most important part of the Canon. It falls into five Nikāyas, Collections, namely: 1. The Dīgha Nikāya, the Collection of Long Discourses, commonly called "The Long Collection". 2. The

Majjhima Nikāya, the Collection of the Middle-Length Discourses, or "The Middle Collection".

3. The Samyutta Nikāya, the Collection of Discourses arranged according to their meaning, "The Collection joined according to their Contents".

4. The Anguttara Nikāya, the Collection in which the several Discourses are arranged in accordance with number, *i.e.* according to the number of subjects dealt with in each of them, but without regard to their content. Accordingly, there is in the Anguttara Nikāya a Book of Ones, a Book of Twos, and so on up to a Book of Elevens. And last: 5. The Khuddaka Nikāya, "The Little Collection", to which belong some of the best-known books of the Canon, above all, the Dhammapada, the "Path of the Doctrine", a collection of sayings apparently originating in the earliest days of Buddhism. Further, there are the Theragāthā and the Therīgāthā, the Songs of the Monks, and the Songs of the Nuns, a collection of chants from the later days of Buddhism; and still further, the Jatakas, the Re-birth Stories of the Buddha.

The Third Book of the Tipitaka is the Abhidhamma, the Book of Philosophy.

It is just this third book of the Tipitaka which is the subject of vehement dispute; question being made as to whether it can be valued as the genuine word of the Buddha (Buddhavacanāṃ).

The scholars of the East esteem it highly, perhaps even more highly than the Sutta Pitaka. But Western scholars see in it a later, merely scholastic phase of Buddhism; and, consequently, a sort of petrification of the living word of the Teacher.

It is not my place here to take sides either with the one party or the other ; I remember only that the word *Abhidhamma* in the Suttas does not at all stand for a definite, spatially separate section of the Teaching ; it signifies nothing else but what the word means, the “ Deeper Teaching ”, as, for example, is evident from this passage in the Anguttara Nikāya I., page 290 : “ Questioned upon the Deeper Teaching, upon the Deeper Discipline (*abhidhamme kho paṇ'abhivinaye puttḥo*) ” and so on.

What distinguishes the Buddhist Canon so strikingly from the Christian Bible is the absence of historical development. This characteristic is imbedded in the very nature of the Teaching. Here it is always and only a question of variations on one and the same theme, *Actuality*. Actuality is the Whole ; it exhibits no development. With respect to what, indeed, should it exhibit development ? Where were the measure by which one could measure this progress ? The Buddha-word breathes of the monotony of Actuality, which summarises its endless variety in the one triple chord : transient, painful, non-self (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*).

To let this triple chord sound out ever and again in new variations and illustrations—that is the task of the Buddhas.

• “ Whether Accomplished Ones (Tathāgatas) appear in the world, or do not appear in the world, this is yet the natural law, the law of all Actuality, the nature of all Actuality, that all constructions are transient, that all constructions are painful, that all things are non-self. This an Accomplished One perceives and penetrates. And when he has per-

ceived and penetrated it, he announces it, points it out, declares it, sets it forth, publishes it, explains it, makes it evident, that all constructions are transient, that all constructions are painful, that all things are non-self" (Anguttara Nikāya I., p. 286).

The Buddha is the proclaimer of Actuality, the teacher of Actuality. In the making known of his transient-painful-non-self formula his function is fulfilled, because with the proclamation of this formula is also given the joyful message of the cessation of all this. One thing only does the Buddha teach, and nothing more: *Suffering and the Cessation of Suffering*. *Pubbe c'āham bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañ c'eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodham* (Majjhima Nikāya 22, and other places).

As regards its contents, Buddhism presents itself as the Teaching of the *Four Noble Truths* (Ariyasacca), and as the Teaching of *Dependent-simultaneous Arising* (Paticcasamuppāda). The former one might call the heart of Buddhism, the latter its backbone. Upon their contents I shall speak later.

The Buddha himself calls his teaching the *Middle Path* (*majjhimā patipadā*), which, "overcoming the two ends, points out in the middle the Doctrine". As this middle path, above and between the contradictions, Buddhism goes its own way through the contradictions of all mental life, as these exhibit themselves on one hand as Faith, on another as Science, on another as Spiritualism, on another as the mechanico-materialistic view of the world.

"All is, Kaccāyana; that is one end. All is

not ; that is the other end. These two ends overcoming, the Accomplished One points out in the middle the Doctrine" (Samyutta Nikāya II.).

As this middle doctrine it has taken its place within the spiritual life of its time, as is shown by its relationship to the doctrines of the Niganthas, those pure spiritualists, on one hand, and to those of Makkhali Gosāla, that pure materialist, on the other. As this middle doctrine it is itself a problem just like Actuality, a problem with all the ambiguity of the problem. In the Samyutta Nikāya IV., p. 400, there occurs the following passage: " ' How is it, Lord Gotama ? Is there a self (*attā*) ? ' asks the wandering monk, Vacchagotta. At these words the Exalted One remained silent. ' Or, Lord Gotama, is there not a self ? ' And for the second time the Exalted One remained silent. Then the wandering monk, Vacchagotta, rose from his seat and went away. And now, shortly after the departure of the wandering monk, Vacchagotta, the venerable Ananda addressed the Exalted One thus : ' Why, Lord, has the Exalted One not answered the question put to him by the wandering monk, Vacchagotta ? ' "

" ' If, Ananda, to the question of the wandering monk, Vacchagotta, " Is there a self ? " I had answered, " There is a self ", I should have been agreeing with the ascetics and Brahmins who teach everlastingness. And if to the question, " Is there not a self ? " I had answered, " There is a self ", then I should have been agreeing with those ascetics and Brahmins who teach annihilation. If to the question, " Is there a self ? " I had answered, " There is a self ", would that have been

in agreement with the knowledge of the non-selfness of all things ? ’

“ ‘ No, Lord.’ ”

“ ‘ If to the question, “ Is there not a self ? ” I had answered, “ There is not a self ”, the infatuation of the infatuated Vacchagotta would only have become greater : “ Alas ! Before, I had a self, and now I have it not ! ” ’ ”

In the Buddha’s own time he did not escape being denounced as a denier of life. “ A nihilist is the ascetic Gotama. He teaches the destruction, annihilation, no further existence, of living beings ” (Majjhima Nikāya 22). While our time, on the contrary, finds pleasure in reading into his teaching the mysteries of an eternal existence.

This problematic character of his teaching involves its infection with the apparent contradiction that on one hand it makes trust in the Buddha an indispensable prerequisite of success ; and on the other hand, it is something of which holds good the crucial word of all Buddhism, *paccattam*, “ through, or for, oneself ”. The Doctrine is the “ to be understood by the wise, each for himself (*paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*) ”. In the Parinibbāna Suttanta (Dīgha Nikāya II., p. 100), he says to his disciple Ananda : “ Be ye lights to yourselves, be ye a refuge to yourselves ; seek not for refuge in others. Let the Doctrine be your light, let the Doctrine be your refuge ; seek not refuge with others.” Of one who has cognised, it is said : “ No further dependent upon the Teaching of the Master (*aparapaccayo satthu sāsane*) ” ; and yet, unshakable confidence in him, the Buddha, the putting away of all doubt, is necessary.



The Buddha requires confidence in himself as Teacher.' On the ground of this confidence he demands of his pupils the highest that one man can demand of another, the sacrifice of his own *I*! Evêr and again through all the Discourses rings out the admonition: "What does not belong to you, that give up! That given up by you, long will make for your weal, for your blessing. And what, monk, does not belong to you? The form does not belong to you; sensation, perception, the concept-formations, consciousness, do not belong to you. In short, what you know as yourself—that give up! That it is not your self, that it is an *I*-delusion (*asmi-māno*), I cannot prove to you. But if you have confidence and follow what I tell you, you shall, in letting go, yourselves experience; and you shall also then experience why all this is not demonstrable, not accessible, to conceptual thinking.

Buddhism is like a bitter medicine which a physician orders for a sick man. Such a man must have sufficient confidence in the physician to induce him to take the bitter medicine, and in his use of it he will experience its healing effect. Should this man say: "Prove to me beforehand that this bitter medicine will help me", the man would die without recovering his health. That he takes the medicine without knowing to a certainty whether it will cure him or not does not indicate blind faith in the physician, but is an act of confidence, of *Saddhā*. And in the very same way: that a man accepts the invitation of the Buddha, and gives up, lets go, does not imply blind faith in the Buddha but is an act of confidence. For, in the giving up he will himself experience that for the sake of which

he is to give up ; and of himself, independent of the grace of another, he will move towards the final goal, the end.

*Dhamma* means *that which carries*, that which carries itself within itself. As the flame, once lit, carries itself within itself, independent of the kindling spark to which it owes its existence, so the Dhamma, once kindled, carries on itself within itself, independent of the Teacher who has shown the Teaching. Buddhism is the only one of all religions whose founder left behind him no successor. When his disciple says to him, the Buddha, after he has recovered from a serious illness : “ I have felt confident that the Exalted One would not be extinguished until he had made his arrangements as regards the Company of Bhikkhus ”, the Buddha replies to him : “ Why, then, Ananda, does the Company of Bhikkhus expect such a thing of me ? I have set forth the Doctrine, Ananda, without making any distinction between outer and inner. With the Accomplished One, Ananda, there is nothing like the closed fist of the teacher. Whoever, Ananda, thinks : ‘ I shall lead the Company of the Bhikkhus, dependent on me is the Company of the Bhikkhus ’, such an one might well make his arrangements as regards the Company of Bhikkhus. But the Accomplished One, Ananda, does not think thus : ‘ I shall lead the Company of the Bhikkhus, dependent on me is the Company of the Bhikkhus ’. Why, indeed, Ananda, should the Accomplished One make his arrangements as regards the Company of the Bhikkhus ? ” (Dīgha Nikāya II., p. 170).

Whoso has grasped the Buddha, whoso has been

grasped by him—he is the “*Dhammabhūto*”, one who has “*become the Doctrine*”; he is the living light-bearer who by his existence provides for the maintenance and spread of the Teaching. Authority and dogma have nothing to do with this doctrine of Actuality which is Actuality itself. Here it is a question of living realisation; then will the flame of the Doctrine propagate itself automatically. “*And if only these monks here should live rightly, the world would never be devoid of Holy Ones*” (Dīgha Nikāya, p. 16).

His teaching is not simply teaching which can be passed on from person to person like a covered basket from hand to hand; it is *knowledge-conduct* (*vijja-caranam*), i.e. something in which conduct must help knowledge, knowledge help conduct, something in which conduct is strengthened by knowledge, knowledge strengthened by conduct. In Buddhism there is no knowledge without right conduct; there is no knowledge without the offering of renunciation. A Buddhism which does not influence conduct and make ready for the sacrifice of self-seeking is no Buddhism. It is, at most, a philosophising about Buddhism, in which Buddhism has a place merely as one among many.

But that is not the case! Buddhism is not one among many. It is a living realisation, a unique living realisation, the living realisation of the possibility of the cessation of beginningless existence, of beginningless wandering through Samsara.

“Through the ignorance, through the not understanding, of four things has this long way been run through, wandered through, by me as by you. Which four? The noble truth of Suffering, the

noble truth of the Arising of Suffering, the noble truth of the Annihilation of Suffering, the noble truth of the Way leading to the Annihilation of Suffering" (Anguttara Nikāya II., p. 1).

These Four Noble Truths have now been found. The Doctrine, the "well-proclaimed (*svākkaḥato*)" is there which reveals life as entirely suffering, and therewith, at the same time, the possibility of getting free from this suffering. Thus henceforth the life of purity, the Brahmachariya life, leads to the total annihilation! The attempt has often been made to test the Buddha and his Doctrine by the sharpness of logic with its "either-or" which is supposed to enclose all conceptual possibilities. Is the world finite or not? Are body and life the same, or are they different? Is suffering generated out of itself, or is it generated by another? And so on! To all these questions the Buddha ever gives only his one—for the outsider—incomprehensible and unsatisfying answer: Neither the one nor the other! There is a mean between the two which is neither identity nor difference, and which only becomes accessible through a man gaining confidence, beginning his own attempts to comprehend, and following on until light breaks upon him of itself.

With this thoroughly necessary warning, I now proceed to my task of presenting Buddhism as this Middle Doctrine, as which it becomes something that does not remain confined to a definite time, to a certain definite circle of culture, but is suited to all times, to all cultures, let these in their outward semblance be ever so different. Actuality is always itself, let it present itself outwardly as it may.

Buddhism is the key to Actuality ; and a time, a period, a cultural epoch which Buddhism does not suit—such a thing there is not. It is the ever-actual, because it is Actuality itself.

He alone who grasps Buddhism as a super-historical phenomenon can acquire a right understanding of it. Certainly everything here present needs a soil, in order to stand on it, in order to sprout up out of it. The Buddha compares himself to the lotus that grows up out of the mud. Thus he has himself sprung from his time ; and philological zeal may well discover the points of contact between him and this time. But in truth he is untouched by any time, as the lotus is untouched by the mud out of which it lifts its head. A growth, a plant, with blossom and fruit, just like all others ; but the rarest, noblest, most precious plant that blossoms out of the traffic of Samsara—a plant so precious and so rare that its perfume permeates the entire Kappa (Kalpa) out of which it springs up, and gives to it its own character. One section of the world in which a Buddha comes forth is truly other than one wherein no Buddha arises. And in the section of the world in which a Buddha comes forth, he has nothing to do with historical phenomena, with emperors and kings, with poets and thinkers, with artists and geniuses. These are all phenomena, begotten of ignorance, nourished by thirst ; these are all Sankharas which come under the one triple chord, *transient, painful, non-self* ! Among all these variegated phenomena, high and low, noble and vulgar, there is nothing that possesses any value in itself. All these phenomena possess value only as instrument which sends

ringing back again to the thinker the great triple chord of Actuality—all, let it call itself, and seem, what it will, transient, unsatisfying, enough to become weary of, enough to turn away from, enough to win free from !

## THIRD CHAPTER

### CONCEPT AND OBJECT

I NOW pass to the second part of my task, to the marking out of the mental life of humanity in its fundamental features, so that I may measure it by Actuality. Actuality is our last and only court of appeal, the judgment seat before which, in the last analysis, everything is decided ; and the value of a world-view resides not in the fact that what it teaches is noble or useful, but in what it contains of Actuality, in its agreement with Actuality. To the actual thinker there is no other truth but Actuality ; and no other proof for truth but harmony with Actuality which experiences itself through itself.

About living experience, to be sure, there is to-day plenty of talk. Faith is always speaking about its living experience of God. But living experience and living experience are not all of the same value. Living experience pure and simple is • by no means living experience of Actuality. And living experience which, with its assumption of an absolute Existence, sets itself up in opposition to Actuality is no real living experience, just as a painted landscape, though painted ever so beautifully, is not a real landscape.

It is well said : “ Freedom from disease is the

highest good, Nibbana is the highest bliss. But what is this freedom from disease? What is this Nibbana? " (Māgandiya Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya 75).

In the same way, to speak about living experience may be all very well; but what is this living experience? Is it Actuality, or is it a fiction, an imagined thing? If one takes a stick for a snake, that too is a living experience; but it is not in harmony with Actuality.

As one does not need to strike a light in order to know that light is present, so one needs no proofs in order to know that harmony with Actuality is present. All mental life, in the last resort, tends towards the question: What is Actuality? And it thereby shows that it does not stand in harmony with Actuality, that it knows of this lack of harmony, and strives toward adjustment. To all mental life Actuality is a problem, an objection, in the literal sense of the word, with which it has to wrestle.

But Actuality is by no means a problem in itself in this fashion—that wheresoever a knowledge of Actuality is present, simply by this fact, the latter also must be present as problem. The young child, the naïve person, the savage, the superficial man of the world, know well that Actuality is present. To each, however, it is no problem in the intellectual sense, but is that which the word really signifies, something that is thrown before him, as the food before the eater; and with reference to which, so far as may be, he plays the part of enjoyer.

Here, despite his knowing about Actuality, mental life as yet has not set in at all. Such a



person, approaching Actuality only as enjoyer, leads no mental life: he only vegetates, or better, he only animalises.

Mental life, and Actuality which confronts it as its problem, are not ready-made positions that fit into each other; but what we call mental life is a process wherein Actuality becomes a problem. Actuality *is* not a problem, else it would be bound to be such for everybody, would be bound to be such everywhere, wherever at all Actuality is known of; but it *becomes* a problem in the course of a mental process of growth of which one can find the counterpart in physiological growth.

There was a time when as yet I could not at all put the question, *What is Actuality?* because the power whereby to do so, the sense-organs, as yet were not at all present: the embryo stage. There was a time when the powers (the senses) were organically embodied but were not yet functioning, when the eye was there but did not see, only looked (as in the new-born child). There was a time when the senses were functioning but succeeded only in procuring a knowledge of objects, not yet a knowledge of the subject, of the *I*; in other words, when consciousness was present but entered into relation only with objects, not with the subject. And at last, with the question, *What is Actuality?* the time has come when not only am I conscious, but I also am conscious of myself and of my knowledge; a time has come when I think, and know about my thinking.

To the child Actuality is no problem. The turning of it into a problem only comes in with the development of consciousness, that is to say, when

consciousness reflects, becomes retro-active, and turns itself upon its own bearer, the subject.

Along with this splendour there also then sets in the misery, inasmuch as this "problematising" of Actuality lays hold of the questioner also,\* and drags him along with it into the mass of the problem. From this results the difficulty which I pointed out in the introduction: If a standpoint is present for the putting of the question, then, simply by this fact, the questioner himself is excluded from Actuality. If the questioner is included, then the standpoint for the putting of the question is wanting.

Thus all mental life is not a fact but a process, *i.e.* the process of the "problematising" of Actuality, which resolves itself into the question: What is Actuality? With this question the questioner finds himself conceptually excluded from Actuality, and seeks conceptually again to effect a junction by trying to bring his knowledge of Actuality into harmony with it, with Actuality. And that, in the last analysis, is the pith and meaning of all mental life, this struggle for Actuality. This struggle is carried on not only in what is called Faith and Science; it takes place also—in all its forms—in what is called Art. In their deepest roots they are all a wrestling with Actuality, a secret longing after Actuality, which Art reveals precisely in its highest representatives, as it vibrates through a Beethoven symphony, a poem of Goethe or Lenau, a picture by Feuerbach, imparting to them their most intimate charm. But—and this is the tragedy of all mental life—as the babe that once has outgrown its mother's womb can never more return to it, so mental life, once it has outgrown

Actuality and placed itself over against it, can never more find its way back to it. Either it dies away in the endless series, or it must choose the outlet of fiction (as Faith) or of hypothesis (as Science).

All this will be explained in more detail further on.

Before, however, setting out upon the search for Actuality I must try to get a clear idea of the preliminary conditions to this search for Actuality, just as, after all, every one who has before him a long and venturesome journey must be clear as to the necessary preliminary conditions, and fulfil them, if he is to have any prospect of reaching his goal.

The first condition is that of *freedom from pre-conceived ideas*. He is a bad truth-seeker who only looks for what he wants to find. A god-seeker is no truth-seeker. He cannot in the least know what he will find in the course of his search, and whether the search for a god will not prove superfluous. For ultimately I am searching, not for God but for Actuality. It is the only thing of which I know *that* it is, of which, however, I do not know *what* it is.

This is the trick of Actuality, that she does not exhibit life by itself, but only as life-phenomena ; that she does not show the inner being but only the outer appearance ; that she shows by hiding, and hides by showing. *Force* is present, for something does *happen* ; but we know only *that* it is, not *what* it is ; and if we call it God, this happens only provisionally, pending a later correction. If any one takes this provisional name for force as final, he is simply prejudiced ; and of him holds good that profound saying of Pascal which, like all profound

sayings, is permeated with this longing after an Actuality to which man has fallen into opposition through ignorance—I refer to that mysterious saying which his God addressed to him in mysterious colloquy : “ Thou would’st not seek me if thou had’st not found me ”.

Again : *Matter* is present ; there does *persist* something. But also of it we know only *that* it is there, but not *what* it is. And what is the reason that of force as of matter I know only *that* they are there, but not *what* they are ? It is not this, that both are transcendent and stand beyond all that is thinkable. I do comprehend them : force as motion, matter as motionlessness ; force as arising, matter as persisting ; so that is not the reason. But the reason is this, that both are present only as *a unity*. A force that is not in combination with matter, a matter that is not in combination with force—such a thing there is not. And the unprejudiced thinker proves himself such precisely in this, that he does not separate the two and then follow up into infinitude the dead threads which still exist on only as abstractions, but allows the two to remain that which they are, and says to himself : Actuality *has* this unity of force and matter, *is* this unity itself ; and it rests with me as actual thinker to lie on watch for this unity.

If this unity is once slain, and plucked asunder into force on one side and matter on the other, then reconstruction of the living unity is hopeless. But I, the actual thinker, know nothing of force, know nothing of matter ; I know only the unity of the two ; and all now depends upon experiencing it.

And just here the Buddha comes in as the incomparable model for us all, for all actual thinkers. He was an unprejudiced seeker. He did not seek for a god like all the millions round him; he sought the truth, and knew that there is no truth save Actuality. He himself tells us of himself: "Seeking the 'What is right? (*kim kusalo gavesi*)' I withdrew from home to homelessness". And his standing admonition was to accept nothing without examination, to assume nothing without examination, not to allow oneself to be overcome by use and wont and the mass of accredited concepts; to add nothing and to take away nothing; what is day, to call day; and what is night, to call night. "Where, taking footing, light opinions can no longer go on persisting; but if light opinions can no longer go on persisting, then one is called an actual thinker" (Dhātuvibhanga Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya 140).

And again: "All the ascetics and Brahmins, Sariputta, who in past time have purified alms, all these, even thus, having contemplated and contemplated again, have purified alms. And also all the ascetics and Brahmins, Sariputta, who in future time shall purify alms, all these, even thus, having contemplated and contemplated again, shall purify alms. And also all the ascetics and Brahmins, Sariputta, who in the present purify alms, all these, even thus, having contemplated and contemplated again, purify alms. Therefore, Sariputta, have ye even thus to train yourselves: 'Contemplating and contemplating again, will we purify alms'. Thus verily, Sariputta, have ye to train yourselves!" (Pindapātaparisuddhi Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya 151).

The second preliminary condition is *confidence*, *Saddhā*.

This does not mean blind faith in the Buddha ; but the confidence which the pupil has in his teacher, the sick man in his doctor, the man who has lost his way in one who knows it. Here it is not a question of a requirement to eliminate one's own thinking and to comply in faith, but of a requirement to have confidence, to follow and to obey until the results of the method are made manifest, until one recognises for oneself : *Yes, it is so !* Growth requires time !

In this sense also is to be understood the requirement not to doubt the Buddha. Doubt as regards the Buddha and the Doctrine, *Vicikicchā*, is one of the *Five Hindrances*. The prohibition, however, does not mean what it means in Faith-religions. It is nothing but an exhortation to go on trusting and repress doubting until the results show themselves, which every one will experience who has confidence and follows the course prescribed. Thus, in its essential meaning, it is only the complement of *Saddhā*.

It might indeed happen that the attempts, independently, by one's own conceptual thinking, to arrive at the goal, might be the very thing preventing success, just as the attempts to free itself, of a dog tied by a running noose to a stake, are precisely what prevent its success, in that all its endeavours to free itself only pull the noose tighter.

The universal instrument of man, of the *homo sapiens*, is logic, reason, argumentation, conceptual thinking. But the question arises : Is the use of this universal instrument everywhere valid ? The

Buddha himself calls his teaching, "the not accessible to reason (*atakkāvacara*)". That thereby he rejects reason itself is not the case; he uses it as does also every other example of the *homo sapiens*. But it might well be that logic is an instrument that is not universally applicable; and that precisely that which is the decisive factor in all mental life is so fashioned that it excludes the application of logic to it.

And here now comes in at once the third requirement set before the actual seeker, the requirement of original thinking (*yoniso manasikāro*), the letting the thought rest quietly upon things, the suspension of this eternal rage for conceptual thinking.

For this is the tragi-comedy of all mental life in the ordinary sense, so far as it is not Buddhism, that it makes use of conceptual thinking, of the concepts, of reason, logic, argumentation, or whatever one likes to call it, as the one instrument of arriving at an understanding of things, and allows nothing to hold good save that which can prove its title before the judgment-seat of reason.

But let us bethink ourselves a little! The possibility of conceptual thought working, coming into play, rests entirely upon this, that concepts in the sense of things conceived are present. I awake to Actuality with the fact concept, on the one hand, in the subjective sense, *i.e.* with my conception; on the other hand, in the objective sense, *i.e.* with the object of my conception. And this is exactly what one calls an actual thinker (*muni santo*)—that one takes nothing for granted, accepts nothing without examination. The weapons of thought are pressed

into my hands in suggestive form, like a winch handle, as it were ; and I need only start turning, and lo ! the whole world sets to dancing to the time-beat of Cause and Effect ! But precisely herein does the actual thinker prove himself such, that he declines to accept all this without examination.

Whoever is content to be nothing but a mere enjoyer of Actuality, he may do that, be it as a common enjoyer (the naïve person, the man of the world), be it as scientific enjoyer, *i.e.* as one who demands nothing of Actuality but to be allowed to measure, compare, calculate in advance.

But the enjoyer is no actual thinker. The actual thinker knows that with him it is not a question of the countless variegated forms of the individual actualities and their relationships, but of Actuality as a whole. Whereupon the question is just this—how the concept has ever been able to come about, in both senses, the subjective as the objective.

That which I see before me here as the object conceived, which as such presents itself in individual phases, sections, segments—that is not there at all, in Actuality. I see before me a tree. I see boughs, leaves, blossoms, seeds, and so forth. But in truth there is nothing there but a single process of growth which does not at all permit of such incisions, because it rolls on and on without a break. As Buddhaghosha, the leading interpreter of the Buddha says : The mere Dhammas (the life-processes) roll on (*suddhā dhammā pavattanti*).

Thus my awakening to Actuality begins with the opposition of concept and object. The concepts present things in the sense of conceived objects,



when in truth there are only unbroken processes of growth. And all mental life sets in with this discord, the question : Is Actuality that as which the concept presents it, namely, as things in the sense of definite objects ? or is it that as which it presents itself, namely, as an unbroken activity ?

That this question cannot be solved by means of conceptual thinking is clear without further words, because thereby the concept would have to sit in judgment on itself. The concept only works where already there are things conceived ; and there, of course, it works with perfect exactitude. But how the concept has ever been able to come about, and whether consequently the concept is the proper implement for conceiving—upon this the concept itself can say nothing. In other words, everything permits of being worked out causally except causality itself. And if the concept, whose true task it ought to be to fashion concepts, only works where already there are conceived objects, then it works with a *petitio principii*, in that it assumes in advance that which through it ought first to be proved—its title in face of Actuality.

With this consideration the entire mental life of humanity is seized by the root, and its further existence threatened.

Let us remember that this entire mental life rests upon the concepts : " This I know ; that I do not know." This I have discovered ; that I have not discovered. Of this I boast ; of that I am ashamed. This I hope ; that I fear. This pleases me ; that does not please me. This ought to be ; that ought not to be. This will be ; that will not be ", and so on ; —all which presupposes concepts. But the concepts

stand in contradiction to Actuality. There are no flowers here in whose perfume I might také pleasure ; there are no fruits here in whose pulp I might find refreshment. Here are only unbroken processes of growth externally, objectively, against which an unbroken process of growth internally, subjectively, stands out, each of the pair changing in correspondance with the other, and producing its reactions, its counter-effects.

As will be shown later, all mental life as criticism centres in the question : *What are the concepts ?* But all mental life in the ordinary sense ends with this question, after it has measured the heights and depths of the universe by the concepts, and laden and sucked itself full with the results of this expedition, like the bee with honey. And if now, at the close, one puts the question : What are the concepts ?—that is to say, if in one's old age one begins to dabble in criticism of one's knowledge, one does not do so with the intention of starting out afresh from the very beginning, but only in order to take possession now of what one has inherited from tradition. One absolutely refuses to endanger the existence of the whole ; but one means to crown, wind up, the whole business, put the dot on the " i " ; in which operation it then may well happen that one puts it instead on the " a " or the " o " !

From all mental life in the ordinary sense Buddhism is distinguished in this—that the all-deciding combat between concept and Actuality wherewith all other mental life culminates, for it, Buddhism, is that with which it begins, and this in fitting and proper fashion. For whether the " This I would like ; that I would not like ; this I

have discovered ; that I have not discovered ; this pleases me ; that vexes me ; of this I boast myself ; of that I am ashamed ”, and so on—whether all this has value and significance entirely depends upon whether the concepts will be justified before Actuality. To know and to hope, to boast and to be ashamed, and so on, is preliminary work ; and its results are to be regarded with reserve until I know what justification the concepts possess when confronted with Actuality. The actual thinker is no longer able to take seriously all this and what results from it, be it a question of common Actuality, with common forms, be it a question of an uncommon Actuality with its uncommon forms—heaven-worlds, spirit-worlds, and so on. It is all alike concept-supported, concept-bound, awaiting the advent of the real, final understanding. Upon that as which I comprehend Actuality depends my judgment as to its worth or worthlessness. On this judgment as to worth and worthlessness depend my fears and hopes, my love and hate, my dislike and my longing for, my rest and my unrest.

“Wheresoever fear arises, it arises in the fool, not in the wise man.”

The fact is : *The concepts are here !* They stand in the heart of Actuality. They are problem, in actuality, *the* problem. But it is here as with the fact of the kernel in the closed shell : it is inside notwithstanding that the shell is closed on all sides, and that hence it cannot have been introduced into it. In the same way, Actuality is closed on all sides. The concept cannot have got into it, and yet it is inside. As my eyes, despite the keenest scrutiny, can find no gap through which the kernel

could have got into the shell, so the concept, despite all effort, finds no gap through which it, the concept, could have got into Actuality.

And so, for the actual thinker, all mental life sets in with this martyrdom, that he alone can pass judgment who himself has tasted and tried it ; and this formulates itself as *the struggle for the standpoint!* If I take the concept as standpoint in face of Actuality, I shut myself out from Actuality. If I include the concept within Actuality, there remains no standpoint from which I could comprehend it, Actuality : thus, here as there, contradiction !

Science, in the form of natural science, physics, physiology, and so forth, has not remained in the dark as to this relationship. Enlightened minds, a Helmholtz, a Mach, a Poincaré, and so on, have not had the least doubt that in truth and Actuality there are no definitely conceived objects, but that there are present only relations, counter-effects, reactions, between senses and objects, between powers and possibilities. But that they have not been able to think out this insight is evidenced by the fact that for them it has remained in the strictest sense a one-sided thing, corresponding to a sheet of paper that has only one side. We disavow the concepts. We are quite clear about it, that “ really ” there are no concepts, but only relations between conceiver and conceived objects ; but all the same we do not despise making use of them. We do just as parents do with their children. We cover up the mystery of their origin with kindly silence, but we are not ashamed to preen ourselves upon their performances, and to allow ourselves to be supported by them.

Even so is it with Science as regards the concepts. The secret of their origin is passed over in kindly silence; but she is not ashamed to preen herself on their performances, and to let herself be supported by them. For this one thing is clear without further words, that Science lives by the concepts. Without concepts she cannot work; and to her it is work that matters before everything! Has a piece of work proved itself vain, useless, one just pulls it down and sets to work anew. Before all else one must work! Thinking will come afterwards of itself, as an *a posteriori* to doing.

But Faith also works with the concepts—to be sure, in the paralogical form of the uncomprehended. Faith, briefly formulated, is the teaching of Actuality as something uncomprehended. Exactly like Science, it takes the concepts on trust; only it interprets them in the opposite way to Science. To the deep, inward unity of the two I shall have to return later.

In contradiction to them all stands out Buddhism with its tremendous demands, “not astonishing, yet never heard before (*anacchariya assutapubba*)”, that before one begins to work one should be clear about the object of the work and the instrument with which one is working.

And here it results that pure logic, here where as pure logic it has for its object itself and the task of justifying itself to itself, bears witness against itself.

Here pure logic ends in the strictly logical necessity of the exclusion of logic itself; and the line of thought runs as follows:

Conceptual thinking, logic, works only where

there are concepts. My task, however, the task of the actual thinker, is precisely not to take Actuality in the form of conceived object and make use of it, but to investigate how these conceived objects could ever have come about. And since I endeavour to carry this out with the help of the concepts, I shall be working with a contradiction in itself, inasmuch as I make that which itself constitutes the object of the investigation the means for making the investigation. Therewith logic, in virtue of itself, in virtue of pure logic, cuts the ground from under its own feet, deprives itself of its own pre-conditions. It follows that the real fight of every actual thinker, the fight between concept and Actuality, cannot be carried through by the concept; and the preparation for, and introduction to, this fight is the emancipation of mind from conceptual thinking, which here is not only useless, but hinders, nay, excludes all possibility of success, inasmuch as that which is the object of the investigation, the fact that concepts are present, it ever and again throws up in front of it in the form of the creation of new concepts, so that the endeavour to arrive at the goal by means of conceptual thinking resembles the attempt of a moving ship to get ahead of its own bow-wave. Just as a ship, in such an endeavour, is bound to throw out in front of itself ever new bow-waves, so the concept, in the endeavour to comprehend the fact of the concepts, must only throw out in front of itself ever new concepts.

This is neither incomprehensibility nor comprehensibility; it is nothing but an ever-repeated new "problematizing" of Actuality in which it, Actu-

ality itself, notwithstanding all our efforts, remains what it is, *problem* !

Is there, however, any form of thinking whatever outside of logical, conceptual thinking ? Yes, there is ! And this precisely is the first-fruits of the ceasing of concepts, of the pause for breath in conceptual thinking, that one notes and experiences how, with it, new possibilities open out. It is here as with a sky from which the clouds are driven away, when it is no void that is there now, but the clear blue. Even so, when the hurry and flurry of the concepts has ceased, it is not a void that is there now, but the blue heaven of the stillness of thought ; clear, immediate insight opens out. There are thought-processes, there is a kind of thinking, that has nothing to do with logic and argumentation. There are forms of immediate mental insight ; it depends only upon allowing them to have a say in face of the boasting of the concepts. He who writes this asserts with all emphasis, that what in long years of reflection he has attained on the way to the goal, has been attained by the emancipation of mind from conceptual thinking through patiently letting the mind dwell upon things, and through immediate mental insight. When one holds up a light in the darkness and one recognises things as they are, what has that to do with logic ? And when the teacher points out : *Thus it is !* and one recognises : *Yes, thus it is !* what has that to do with logic ? Logic presupposes conceived objects and produces new concepts ; but that according to which all conceived things are to be evaluated, the power of conceiving itself—that is not accessible to logic.

This is something to be well weighed before accusing Buddhism of a lack of logic, and before one attempts, in doing violence to its very nature, to turn it into a logical, perfectly demonstrable system. Actuality is growth and, as such, rejects those fundamentals of all logical thinking, the law of identity and contradiction. Identities there are none in Actuality, nor yet contradiction and opposition. Here there are only unbroken transitions, of which the later is neither the same as the earlier, nor yet another. Here there is only an unbroken chain of passings over, no item in which is identical with its forerunner in the chain, nor yet totally different.

With this immediate insight, free of concepts, the Buddha—as he tells us in the *Saccaka Sutta* (Majjhima Nikāya 36)—himself entered upon his journey towards the highest.

“I remembered, Aggivessana, how, while my father was engaged in the ceremonial ploughing, sitting in the shade of a Jambu tree I dwelt far from lusts, far from unwholesome things, in possession of the first mental concentration, with its impressions, with its considerations, the born of solitude, the joyful, the happiness-bestowing. Might not this be the way to Awakening? And following this memory, Aggivessana, the consciousness came to me: ‘This, truly, is the way to Awakening’.”

But it is here as with one who, blinded by daylight, looks into a dark room. At first he sees nothing. But if he has confidence, patience, freedom from preconceptions, it will gradually but surely become light to him, and he will recognise



things in the dark room which at first he had not recognised ; and this, not because of any conceptual procedure, but because he was blinded by the daylight, and this blinding by the daylight has been removed.

This blinding by the daylight is a blinding by the concepts in two senses, which, as a matter of fact are " blinders " in the real sense, inasmuch as they exhibit Actuality in a form that does not correspond to it—that is, as the concepts. If one tries to bring this form of thinking to a standstill, then one will surely experience where lies true energy—in giving free rein to the play of the concepts, or in a fight against this free, yea, unbridled play. The difficult thing here is not the moving—that takes place of itself—but the standing still. If, however, through practice, through patience, one at length succeeds, one will also experience how then that other form of thinking emerges, flashes out, which does not consist in an apparent increase in the mass and stock of Actuality, but in the immediate apprehending of this stock.

Thus the provisional result with which I here conclude is a new conception of knowledge in general. By knowledge in the customary, usual sense is commonly understood an *increase* of knowledge, *i.e.* a creating of concepts, in which, so to speak, conceptual knowledge is a capital fund concerning which the question is, how to increase it.

That the capital has really been increased would have to be demonstrated by my having drawn nearer to the goal of knowledge ; and this goal is the harmony between Actuality and the knowledge of it, between object and concept, striven after by

all mental life. If, however, I view in clear light the process of what is usually called knowledge and increase of knowledge, it is evident that there can be no talk whatever of an increase of knowledge and of an approach to an ideal goal. If I comprehend water as the union of definite proportions of hydrogen and oxygen, thereby, so far as the usufruct of Actuality is concerned, I unquestionably have gained something; but just as unquestionably I have gained no contribution towards the comprehension of Actuality. All that has happened is that new concepts have pushed themselves into the places of the old, which now in their turn have to be comprehended by new concepts, and so on and on. And thus it is everywhere! It is always only a question of paraphrases, of variations, permutations, of a given theme, which does not permit of any movement forward whatever, for the simple reason that the measuring rod is lacking by which this forward movement might be measured; and this, not because it is not there at all, but because in the course of events it ever and again fashions itself anew, even as concept. Thus it happens here as with a man who is marching towards the horizon. The standard by which to measure whether he really has drawn nearer to his goal is only the horizon, and this travels along with the traveller, as the concepts along with the search for the concept. Or, it is here as with a man who digs into a heap of earth, and thereby throws up a new heap, which also he again digs into, and so on and on. Even so, in the search for the concept one conceived thing is explained by another, this again by another, whereby ever and again new concepts are thrown

up which require new concepts for their explanation. Ever and again, new science ; but science that can equally as well be called nescience ! Ever and again new answers, but every answer a new question ; and the goal, notwithstanding all our exertions, remains equally near, equally far ! Despite all our progress, no progress ! The capital with which I started, *i.e.* the conceptual knowledge with which I awake to Actuality without knowing how I arrive at it, has always changed only in its form, never in its content. And all conceptual thinking consists, not in an actual knowing, *i.e.* in an increase of capital, but in the ever-repeated new working up of the given capital, concept. And here, to the actual thinker, what matters cannot be the results of this procedure, let these be ever so noble (as Faith), ever so useful (as Science), but simply the question : *Whence comes the original capital ?* And that is a question to which, for the moment, I can give no answer but this : I, the thinking man, with this question awake to Actuality. That the answer to it is Buddhism itself, what follows is meant to show.

Here I must content myself with laying it down that all conceptual knowledge exhibits only an *apparent* increase of the amount of Actuality. In every act of conceptual thinking, even if it have as object the abstract, the concept itself, there takes place an increase, a process. Conceptual thinking is consciousness in the form of *becoming* conscious, consciousness, so to say, *in statu nascendi*. On the other hand, mental insight is thinking, not as a process of the increasing of Actuality (*lokavaddhana*), but as simply a taking

stock of Actuality ; and it is only a question of letting this stock have a say in face of the all-oppressing, exuberant growth of conceptual thinking.

Herein is proven the prejudiced partiality of all mental life when, in the fight between concept and Actuality, it decides in favour of the concept, and endeavours to mould and fashion Actuality after the pattern of the concept. Whereby then what results is this : Along with the possibility of conceptual thinking, *i.e.* along with the standpoint *over against* Actuality, one creates at the same time the insufficiency of conceiving. If the concept is a means to conceiving, *i.e.* a something qualitatively different from the other actualities, and opposed to them, then, to be sure, the possibility of conceiving is present. But this possibility is at the same time impossibility, because along with it is given also the now unbridgeable contradistinction to Actuality which is not unbridgeable in itself, but unbridgeable because in every attempt at bridging it it posits itself afresh so as to be able to conceive : a standpoint must be present from which one does one's conceiving. But this standpoint over against Actuality also includes the impossibility of conceiving, for the latter must consist in a coinciding between standpoint and Actuality, between concept and object. The impossibility of conceiving is here no absolute impossibility, but an impossibility which only comes in with the attempt to conceive, just as it is only the attempt to reach the horizon which demonstrates the impossibility of doing so. The whole procedure works with a contradiction in itself which conceptual thinking itself lays bare, and in which it bears witness against itself

when as "mind" it places itself in opposition to "nature", and contends for her as the bridegroom for the bride.

When conceptual thinking lays bare this contradiction in itself, and bears witness against itself, it thereby calls itself back to Actuality, and shows its membership of Actuality in the form of this parallogism.

Farther than this, to be sure, its power does not extend. That the concept might be able to comprehend itself in its relation to Actuality is unthinkable, inasmuch as the attempt to do so would ever and again only set up new concepts, and thereby new oppositions to Actuality. The highest to which conceptual thinking can come is this, that it comprehend itself and Actuality in the concept common to both—the problem. Actuality is outer problem, as object of knowing; and the concept is inner problem, as a living experience; consequently the two coincide in the fact, problem!

Herewith I have arrived at the point where the individual's powers are at an end, where the only choice is either to fall in with the fictive procedure of Faith or the hypothetical procedure of Science; or else seek for instruction. And it is here that Buddhism becomes of irreplaceable value to the actual thinker, and the Buddha-word the greatest of gifts.

As a child trying to solve the question as to how the kernel ever got inside the shell that is closed on every side will strain his mental powers in vain, and as such a child must be taught by a grown-up person about the processes of growth, so man, in the endeavour through conceptual thinking to

solve the mystery as to how the concept ever forced its way into Actuality that is closed in on all sides, will exert himself in vain. The teacher must appear and must instruct him about the process of growth that here is in progress, otherwise he cannot understand; not because it is here a question of an incomprehensibility in itself, but because it is precisely the attempts to comprehend which ever and again hinder success.

Hence the first thing for all actual truth-seekers is this: a pause in the forming of concepts. To cease from this useless, ever-repeated throwing up of ever-repeated new masses of knowledge; and to let *that* state of knowledge have a say which, through the importunateness of conceptual thinking, for long has been choked up like a spring under a quicksand.

Buddhism, briefly put, is that form of mental life which in the fight between concept and Actuality, not without due examination, takes the part of the former, and now from this side seeks to interpret Actuality, whereupon the entire mental life exhibits itself as a process in which a minus sign must be made up for, corresponding to a gap to be filled up between Actuality and the knowledge of it. This gap between concept and Actuality is precisely that with which the concept comprehends itself as standing in contradiction to itself; and it is not a question of filling up this gap—an attempt which, as just shown, includes, along with its possibility, its impossibility—but of pointing out the sufficient reason for this gap. Starting out from conceptual thinking, that is not possible; because it is not at all a question of objects but of the relationship

between concept and object for the mastery of which the concept would have to pass beyond itself, would have to become transcendent with regard to itself—which is at once unthinkable and impossible.

It is clear, without further words, that thereby the whole of mental life, from the foundation upward, undergoes a new judgment. Henceforth it is no longer a question of its contents, let these be ever so noble and ever so useful. All these contents have their rise in conceptual thinking, and are of a purely provisional nature so long as the title of the concept to serve as a means to comprehension has not been proven. I repeat: Henceforth it is no longer a question of the contents of the mental life, but of its antecedent conditioning; and the final object of all mental life is not the conceptual enjoyment of Actuality, of which the possibility is given along with the concept as the standpoint in face of Actuality, but the question as to the antecedent condition, as to the sufficient reason, of both; because otherwise nothing can be said about the relationship between concept and object, upon which in the last analysis all depends.

A necessary preliminary task to this is an impartial taking stock of the actual, of the given. And the impartiality of this stock-taking will be proven in this, that one adds nothing to it out of one's own conceptual thinking.

## FOURTH CHAPTER

### THE CONSTITUENTS OF ACTUALITY

My first question, the first question of the actual thinker, is this: What, with my awaking to Actuality, are the given constituents of Actuality? What is the content embraced in that question with which, in the last analysis, all mental life begins: *What is Actuality?*

To this the answer runs: The question *What is Actuality?* embraces:

1. *Objects*, as object and possibility of the question.
2. Me, the *subject*, as questioner; which implies power of question.
3. *Consciousness*, as the question itself, inasmuch as with the knowledge of objects on one hand, and of the subject on the other, there is also given at the same time the questionable nature of both.

In short: The world is present; I am present; the knowledge of both is present; and in addition, the knowledge of this knowledge.

That with this knowledge, grasped in purely conceptual fashion, no actual knowledge is given follows from this, that, grasped in purely conceptual fashion, this knowledge of knowledge can be comprehended as well in the sense of an Actuality



closing itself within itself as in the sense of an Actuality proceeding forth out of itself. In the former case I comprehend this knowledge of knowledge as a state in which knowledge becomes objective for itself, *i.e.* in which, so to speak, Actuality turns back upon itself, inasmuch as this knowledge in the form of the objective would add itself to the total mass of Actuality.

With equal right, however, I can also regard this knowledge of knowledge as the initial link of an endless series, *i.e.* as a process in which the knowledge of Actuality keeps withdrawing itself ever farther from Actuality, somewhat as a tangent withdraws itself ever farther from the circle the farther it is produced. The knowledge of knowledge is itself again the object of a knowledge of this knowledge of knowledge, and so on in an endless series of empty concepts void of content.

As said, both modes of comprehension, the centripetal as the centrifugal, from the purely conceptual standpoint, possess equal justification, so that the right of conceptual thinking to come to a decision here is thus excluded in advance.

The first question as to the ingredients of Actuality is this: *Is this all?* Is there nothing here save the objects, the subject, and the knowledge of them as the intermediary between the two? And here at this point comes in immediate perception, and demonstrates at once its existence and its value.

With the help of this immediate perception which excludes every conceptual mode of procedure, I answer: There is something else here—that within which all this is present, namely, *time* as the

containing vessel for the processes, and space as the containing vessel for the objects.

In order to establish the existence of time and space there is no need of conceptual thinking, but only of immediate perception.

But now I must keep quite clearly before myself that time and space, in the form in which I picture them, possess validity solely in dependence upon the concepts, in the subjective as in the objective sense. Only where things are present in the sense of something conceived, of something defined, is space present as the interval given along with them, as the expression of the pure simultaneousness of things, and time as the pure successiveness of processes. Two balls, as defined bodies, have space between them, and require time to traverse this space.

The actual thinker will have to bear that well in mind when he comes to deal with the question as to what now in truth space and time are, apart from their being correlatives of the concept. He then will have to see clearly that in the comprehension of space and time he must not allow himself to be prejudiced by the form given along with the concepts. Yet once more: *Space as the vessel in which things exist, and time as the vessel in which they run their course, are ideas which are fitting only where, and for so long as, concepts are present.*

When thus immediate perception apprehends time and space as such, it therewith apprehends something which is present only in dependence upon conceptual thinking, and therewith brings itself into dependence upon the latter, inasmuch as in the fight between concept and Actuality it takes the

side of the concept, and sees time and space in the form which the concept gives to them.

Now the given fact of object, subject, and the knowledge of them is only in appearance a self-subsistent trinity. In truth this fact develops into the question: *What is Actuality?* It thus is no self-subsisting unity, but a thing that points beyond itself.

Experience, indeed, shows that with the fact, *object, subject, consciousness*, no self-subsisting unity is given but only a sort of point of intersection, proceeding from which each of the three partners goes—as also, points—his own way.

Objects point away beyond themselves as things, as masses of the objective; and experience teaches that every attempt to grasp this totality of the objective by encompassing and spatially circumscribing them is vain. Actuality as the mass of things, *i.e.* as a fact existent in space, is, as regards its limits, unknowable. No microscope yet, no telescope, has reached the spatial limits of Actuality.

This experience of spatial infinitude the Buddha expresses in the following form:

“Place, Sāvattthī.

“Standing to one side, the son of the gods, Rohitassa, thus addressed the Exalted One: ‘Where, Lord, there is neither living nor growing old, nor dying, nor disappearing and reappearing—can one, Lord, by travelling, know, experience, reach, the end of the world?’

“‘Where, O friend, there is neither being born nor growing old, nor dying, nor disappearing and reappearing—one cannot by travelling (*gamanena*)

know, experience, reach, this end of the world ' ' ' (Samyutta Nikāya I., p. 61).

Objects, further, point beyond themselves as regards their existence in time. No chronometer, no number, can give any idea of the temporal constitution of the world. Like its spatial bounds, the beginning of the world in time is unknowable. The time-measure of Actuality is the Kappas (Sanskrit, Kalpas), the world-epochs which succeed one another without number. This experience of temporal infinitude is expressed by the Buddha in the following form :

“ Place, Sāvattthī.

“ There now betook himself. . . .

“ Sitting to one side . . . ‘ How long, Lord, lasts a Kappa ? ’

“ ‘ How long, monk, lasts a Kappa one cannot calculate: so many years, so many hundreds of years, so many thousands of years, so many hundreds of thousands of years.’

“ ‘ But cannot one give a comparison ? ’

“ ‘ One can, O monk,’ answered the Exalted One. ‘ Suppose there were a great rock, a mile long, a mile broad, and a mile high, not split, not holed, solid. And suppose that only once in every hundred years a man passed a soft cloth over it. Then, O monk, that great block of stone with this treatment would be destroyed, would come to an end, more quickly than a Kappa. So long, monk, lasts a Kappa. And of such long Kappas, O monk, it is not one, nor a hundred, nor a thousand, nor hundreds of thousands, that have been travelled through (in Samsara). And what is the reason of this? Without discernible beginning, O monk, is

the Samsara,' " and so on (Samyutta Nikāya II., pp. 182-3).

Objects not only persist but they arise. Actuality is not only existence but also happening. Actuality is action. All action, in so far as it presents itself for knowledge, takes place under the forms of cause and effect, *i.e.* as causality.

In the causal series every link is so fashioned that on one hand it is cause with reference to an effect, and on the other hand it is itself effect with reference to another cause. A first link in the series which, as such, would be wholly cause, or a last which, as such, would be wholly effect, there is none. Every link is the unity of both, and thereby an answer in the form of a question which again demands an answer, and so on. In the causal series are united infinitude of time and infinitude of space. To a boundless time as arising corresponds a boundless space as possibility for this arising.

" Without discernible beginning, ye monks, is the Samsara; a first beginning of beings caught in ignorance, fettered by thirst, thither hastening, thither wandering, is not discernible (*na paññāyati*). Just as if, ye monks, a man were to take what there is in this Jambudīpa (India) of grass and boughs and twigs and leaves, gathered them together into a heap, and made pieces four fingers long of them, and laid them one by one aside (saying): 'This is my mother, this is my mother's mother'—un-completed would remain the succession of the mother of the mother of this man. What, however, there was in this Jambudīpa of grasses and boughs and twigs and leaves—this would come to an end. And what is the reason for this? Without discern-

ible beginning is the Samsara. A first beginning of beings caught in ignorance, fettered by thirst, thither hastening, thither wandering, is not discernible" (Samyutta Nikāya II., p. 178.)

Infinity of space, infinity of time, and infinity of action as the union of these two—this it is that the world of objects teaches for the conceptual understanding.

In the question *What is Actuality?* the world of objects constitutes, as already said, the object of the question. The world of the subject constitutes the power of putting the question.

But this power of putting the question also points away beyond itself in an endless series into which I am unable to follow it by means of conceptual thinking.

Finally: In the question *What is Actuality?* consciousness constitutes the question itself. With this question it is given that Actuality, *as* such, is conceptually present, which yet again contradicts the question itself. Were Actuality present *as* such, *i.e.* as something conceived, there would be no need for the question. If the question is needed, then it cannot be present as something conceived.

With this the actual thinker is put to his severest test. The endless series is the *experimentum crucis* which decides as to whether he can lay claim to be an actual, *i.e.* an unbiassed, thinker. If he is an actual, unprejudiced thinker, he will remain firm and clear in face of the repulsions and attractions, the threats and the allurements, of the endless series, saying to himself: "This is merely problematical; this is not affirmation; this is not denial; this is not possibility, not impossibility, not a

thinkable thing, not an unthinkable thing. The decision as to this does not lie in the series itself, but in the antecedent conditionings ; and these are not accessible to me."

If, however, he does not hold his ground in face of the repulsions and attractions, the threats and allurements, of the endless series, then he succumbs to the temptation to fling this outcome of immediate perception as fodder, so to speak, before conceptual thinking, to treat the endless series conceptually, and to draw the following conclusion :

" When I trace out the series, I find no end, no beginning. But since this series, nevertheless, *must* some time, somehow, have an end, a beginning, I therefore shall surely find it some day." Or he comes to this conclusion : " I have found no end, consequently the series is absolutely endless ".

According to this difference of reaction to the fact of the endless series, all mental life divides itself into the two fundamental main currents, *Faith* and *Science*.

*Science* is that form of mental life which reacts to the fact of the endless series with "*comprehensibility*". *Faith* is the form which reacts to the same fact with "*incomprehensibility*".

*Science* says : Actuality and the knowledge of it coincide, even if provisionally, and not yet actually, nevertheless, potentially. Actuality by its nature is comprehensible. Between possibility and thinkability there exists a relationship, a rationale. *Actuality is a rational fact ; by its nature material, sense-perceptible, physical.*

The endless series of itself attests nothing as to whether Actuality and the knowledge of it coincide,

or whether indeed they ever at any time can be brought to coincide. Certainly experience shows that there exist many things which formerly had no existence, had not come into existence, and which, through perseverance and the appropriate 'technique, can be brought into existence. There are rays of light beyond the limits of the spectrum, ultra-rays. There are tones beyond the ordinary scale of tones, ultra-tones, and so forth. But all this only means that the endless series can be pushed back ever farther. It says nothing, however, as to the nature of the endless series itself, whether it is the expression of a comprehensibility, or of an incomprehensibility, of Actuality.

Such is the standpoint of Science.

On the other hand *Faith* interprets the endless series as an absolute incomprehensibility. If, in the mode of understanding things, of Science, Actuality by its nature is a *sensuous-physical* thing, in the mode of understanding things, of Faith, it is a *supersensuous-metaphysical* thing. Possibility and thinkability here do not correspond with each other : between the two there exists no relationship. *Actuality is an irrational fact—by its nature, force.*

Despite their apparently contradictory nature, *Science* as the doctrine of matter, *Faith* as the doctrine of force, the two nevertheless coincide in this, that both work with a contradiction in itself, inasmuch as both express a judgment as to the relations between Actuality and the knowledge of it, between object and concept, whether this interpretation falls out as Faith imagines it does, namely, that the endless series amounts to incomprehensi-



bility, and life is a force-process, or whether it falls out as imagined by Science, namely, that the endless series amounts to comprehensibility, and life is a matter-process, whereby, then, the concept would take up a standpoint above itself and Actuality—which is both unthinkable and impossible.

It is clear, without further words, that the answers thus yielded can have only a fictive or a hypothetical meaning ; and consequently that all that Science and Faith throw up in the way of facts has value for the actual thinker, not as regards their contents, but as regards the fact of their existence, which permits of being formulated thus :

How is it possible that the knowledge of Actuality, the concept, stepping beyond itself, can pass judgment upon its relation to Actuality, and interpret the relationship between Actuality and the knowledge of it, between object and concept, between possibility and thinkability, at one time as incomprehensibility, as irrationality (as does Faith), and at another time as comprehensibility, as rationality (as does Science)? In short : *How are fiction and hypothesis possible? How must Actuality be fashioned in order to be able to take in fiction and hypothesis, and yet remain actual?* The answer to this question is Buddhism !

## FIFTH CHAPTER

### FAITH AND SCIENCE, AS FICTION AND HYPOTHESIS

IT is not my present task here to enter into details ; I need only trace out the main roads in this garden gone wild with weeds. I cannot go into things more closely simply because, as everywhere in mental life, here we have to do not with facts but with processes, and with processes of growth, to which in their various phases one must give way. Here I can only call attention to the law that in the foregoing I have compared with the spiral. All possible doctrines of Actuality repeat themselves, only, not as a pure "yet once more", but as a repetition from a higher standing-ground, so that, to be sure, it is the same skeleton of thought which results, but clothed with other flesh and blood.

Thus the interpretation of Actuality as object has been carried out as completely from the standpoint of Science by the atomistic thinkers of Greece as by modern physical science, but the standing-ground of the latter is a higher one. In the interval man has not stood still, but has completed a movement which now reveals itself as a spiral. The like holds good of the other possibilities. They have all been worked out many times, but from different intellectual positions, so that to the super-

ficial they may appear as entirely new modes of comprehending things.

Into this immanent development I cannot here enter ; I can only now and again call attention to it.

If 'Actuality' is worked out from the standpoint of Science as the *sum total of objects*, there results what we recognise to-day as physical science, also as the mechanico-materialistic view of the world, which in substance permits of being briefly summarised thus :

Nothing is here present but mass and motion, *i.e.* matter and mechanics. Here matter coincides with mass, and force with motion. Thus between force and matter there comes in that complete separation which proves that here we have to do not with Actuality but merely with a way of reading Actuality. Actuality itself exhibits no separation of force and matter, but constitutes the union of both.

Motion here is only impact-motion, which includes fall-motion, *i.e.* a motion which itself again is a reaction with regard to another, which in turn is a reaction with regard to another ; and so on, backwards, in an endless series which, for force, leaves no point where it finally might seize a footing, and which involves this, that in the mode of understanding things peculiar to science nothing is left to force but the work done in impact or in fall.

This Actuality, in all its forms, is something that is completely and entirely comprehended. Here matter is understood as mass, measurable, weighable, comparable, and so on. Force is understood as work performed ; time as fall-time, space as fall-space, *i.e.* as positive values which, as such, can be interpreted equally as well in an

absolute sense, as by Newton, as in a relative sense, as by Einstein.

This world-picture which, with admirable completeness and logical consistency, Science has built up with the help of numerous diligent, self-sacrificing hands and heads, is rightly called *exact*. Every moment in the flow of events therein is the inexorable succession of cause and effect. Here causality is God. Here one thing is strictly deduced from another thing definitely different. Here is no toleration for that indefinite—to the exact thinker—uncomfortable relation to oneself which is to be found in all growth, that dependence upon oneself which means at the same time, to a certain degree, sovereignty. Here one has to conform oneself to the rigid succession, cause-effect, which permits of no possibility of mental reservation. Every moment of Actuality is a calculable possibility. Thinkability and its components coincide. Unalloyed rationality exists between Actuality and the knowledge of it.

Now it is beyond question that Actuality up to a certain degree, and in one of its modes, conforms to this scheme, is readable according to it.

If I contemplate Actuality according to the forms under which it exhibits itself, it immediately divides itself into two forms apparently standing in opposition to one another: living Actuality (the living being), and dead Actuality; or, as one usually says, into organic and inorganic nature.

The two are distinguished from each other in this, that the living actualities possess an internal motion which exhibits itself to our knowledge as nutrition and growth; while the dead actualities

possess no internal motion ; that is to say, they do not possess the power of maintaining themselves by the assimilation of nourishment.

What yields the possibility of reading both kinds of Actuality according to the same scheme is the fact of external motion in which they both coincide. I, the living being, besides the internal motion, growth, possess an external motion, locomotion, which—as physical science actually does do—can be interpreted as fall, and, as a matter of fact, also does become fall when, for example, I, the living being, lose the ground from under my feet. In this “fall” I become mere mass and pure subject of the law of fall, the law of gravitation.

Exact science's schema of mass and motion in time and space as positive values is clearly borrowed from inanimate Actuality. From what has been said above, it is evident that to a certain degree it can also be applied to living actualities.

Physics with great success has carried out her task of reading the physical processes in accordance with the schema of a fall motion ; and she *must* carry out this task, because else no possibility of calculation would be left to her. Heat, light, electricity, and so forth become calculable only when they are read as a form of motion, as a fall from higher levels to lower levels, of tension. And physiology has followed her upon this path with marked success. She too is in a position to read the physiological processes according to the schema of a fall and an equilibration of tension. And all goes splendidly until one comes to the “reader” himself, *i.e.* to the power on the basis of which all this is present *as such—consciousness!* And here

is shown in the clearest light the purely hypothetical character of the whole of this powerful structure of thought—hypothetical, because, in its thinking out, cutting the ground from under its own feet.

If this, the world-picture appertaining to the mechanico-materialistic view of things, were to be realised, there would be no place left in it for consciousness. For consciousness is precisely an entering into relations with oneself; and here, in this world-picture, there are only relations between masses.

Accordingly one must call in question the bold promise of Science some time in the future to be able to introduce consciousness also into this world-picture, to interpret it as fall-motion. Either it remains consciousness, and then it blows sky-high this whole world-picture, as one single uneven number makes an end of the evenness of any, though it were the largest, even number; or else it conforms itself to the schema of fall-motion, and then it is no longer consciousness, it is no longer an entering into relations with itself.

In such a world-picture there would be nothing but the pure physical succession of cause and effect. Here everything would permit of being determined causally. Every moment of Actuality would be the reaction of another moment of Actuality, this, in turn, the reaction of another, and so on, backwards, in an endless series of reactions.

The world-picture of exact science listens for the master-word, re-actuality, just as it is designed only for re-actualities.

Re-actualities is the name which I give to the actualities which above I called dead, inorganic,—

dead, because force is no longer active, at work, in them; and which therefore offer no objection to force being interpreted as work performed.

This re-actuality makes possible exactitude; but it is also it which cuts the ground from under the feet of the whole structure, and hands it over without reservation to Faith. For, where one thing ever and again is only the reaction of another, so that the whole world-picture becomes one single great system of reactions, the outcome—by logical necessity—is a cause corresponding to all these reactions. For a universe cannot be a reaction in itself, cannot have been there for ever as a reaction. Reaction demands a cause; and this cause is the prime mover of the whole of this play of reactions, the finger of God that has wound up the world-clock, and now, with the exactitude of a piece of clockwork, lets it hasten towards its running down. The one logical necessity of this world-mechanism entirely made up of mass and movement is *the god* who has set the mechanism going.

What I said above, that in the fact "concepts" conceptual thinking works with a contradiction in itself, inasmuch as it assumes in advance that which it first ought to create, here finds its fulfilment, inasmuch as the pure rationalism of this world-mechanism, in the last analysis, serves for nothing but to create the conceptual necessity of the irrational, of the metaphysical, of God. Thus does the exclusion of consciousness take its revenge in the introduction of God into the universe. Where the world becomes a mechanism, there God becomes a conceptual necessity, simply as a machine-master. Science becomes quartermaster for Faith; and the

two reveal themselves as sprung from a common root.

That this common root exists is proven by the fact that with the same right wherewith one calls Science the quartermaster of Faith one can call Faith the quartermaster of Science.

For this entire world-mechanism is thinkable and possible only as a pure reaction of God, *i.e.* as pure creation ; and this pure mechanism it is which first makes possible for God the pure rôle of creator, and therewith, omnipotence. Here the universe is pure effect, in face of God as pure cause. Here no arbitrary consciousness, no arbitrary growth, no private relations of Actuality, come in as a disturbing factor which might advance a claim to be themselves something more than a mere reaction of divine omnipotence.

Thus does Faith prove itself the quartermaster of Science. Were Faith not present, Science would have to invent it for itself in order to obtain a support for its world-mechanism. And were there no Science, then Faith would have to invent it in order to obtain for its God as pure force, as omnipotence, the only possible object—the world as pure reaction, as mechanism, in which everything—not only every hair that falls from my head, but also every motion of thought and will—is the mechanically regulated reaction of another, and therewith, in the last analysis, a reaction of divine omnipotence. Here consciousness is no longer an entering into relations with oneself—that were blasphemy, a revolt against God !—but a reaction of divine force, a link in the mechanism. Possibility and thinkability do not coincide ; there exists pure



irrationality between the two. Actuality absolutely passes away out beyond thinkability.

Scientifically also, both point to a common root, since Science in the last resort must take refuge in the axioms, *i.e.* in forms of Faith; and Faith in dogma, *i.e.* logical proof. All proofs of the existence of God, so far as their logic is concerned, are irrefutable. They possess only this one defect, that they act as proof only where the god is already present as a something believed in, thus, where proof is no longer necessary. For here also holds good the law that logical thinking demands conceived objects in order to be able to work!

So much, for the present, about Actuality as object, and its working out from both standpoints, —that of Faith and that of Science.

If now I follow up the second string of Actuality, *the subject*, I step out of the *pure succession of cause and effect* into the *pure simultaneity of perception and object*. Actuality, transferred to the subject, becomes power of cognition. And if in the world of objects there is no place whatever for the subject, equally so in the world of the subject the objective world is present only as a dependent of the subject. I, the knowing subject, my power of cognition, is the bearer of the world. In the former case we have objects without a subject; in the latter case no possibility of the existence of objects without a subject. In the former case the world is a mechanism, a fall, which falls towards the total dissipation of energy, and therewith towards the necessity of a divine revival; in the latter case the world is pure perception.

As Actuality can be interpreted as object, so

also can it be interpreted as subject, from the standpoint of Faith as well as from the standpoint of Science.

Here also, as there, we have repetition. In the Platonic idealism, Actuality as subject has been interpreted from the standpoint of Faith; and to-day it is again being revived from a higher plane in the logistic philosophy of the so-called Marburg School. "There is nothing independent of our thinking; but only in so far as they are thought, are objects present for us. The object *is* not; it only *becomes* in the cognition of it" (Müller-Freienfels, *Philosophie des XX. Jahrhunderts*, p. 19).

What perception has won here, conceptual thinking has now to work up. And now this is formulated as the task of conceptual thinking: "To discover Being at its primordial source; consequently Being can have no other ground than that which thinking itself may provide for it". That is to say: One tries to create Being by mere thinking. That, however, would mean the positing of an absolute thinking, and thereby the working with a contradiction in one's preliminary assumption. For an absolute power of thought, precisely through its absoluteness, would bar its own access to the objects of cognition, cut off its relation to them as consciousness. Possibility and thinkability here do not coincide; there remains a degree of irrationality between them. Here Actuality points absolutely away out and beyond thinkability, to wit, in the form of an absolute power of thought which, on the very ground of its absoluteness, must for ever remain a power without possibility.

So much for that !

If one works out *Actuality as subject* from the *standpoint of Science*, there results the task of making the power of cognition—on the basis of which the subject precisely *is* a subject—into a phenomenon of life, *i.e.* having it swallowed up in its organs (eye, ear, brain, and so forth), a task on which physiology, as a matter of fact, is at work, despite its impossibility. Possibility and thinkability here would coincide; there would exist rationality between the two. Actuality would extend only so far as exists thinkability.

Here also one works with a contradiction in itself, inasmuch as a power of cognition which, in its organ, would have become a complete phenomenon of life, at the same time would no longer remain a power, but would become a mere possibility just like the other objects. In both cases there results a world in which consciousness has no place.

If, however, in the former case, with “logic-ism”, one works with a contradiction in the preliminary assumption, *i.e.* with a fiction, inasmuch as one posits in advance an absolute power of thinking, and therewith oneself cuts off its application to its object, its entering into relations with the objects, here one works with a contradiction in the deduction drawn, *i.e.* with a hypothesis, which, when followed up, would cut the ground from under its own feet. Here, as there, contradiction ! And here also Faith and Science coincide in the higher unity of the *contradiction in itself*.

Thus much, at present, concerning Actuality as subject, and its working out in both modes of comprehension.

If now I follow up the third string of Actuality, *consciousness*, I step out of the pure succession of objects, and the pure simultaneity of knowing subject and its objects, into the succession and simultaneity of consciousness becoming conscious of itself.

If in the objective mode of comprehending things the object is Actuality, if in the subjective mode the subject is Actuality, in the reflexive mode of comprehension consciousness is Actuality. In other words : If in the objective mode of comprehending things Actuality coincides with the object of the question, with the possibility of the question, and if in the subjective mode it coincides with the questioner, with the power of asking the question, in the reflexive mode of comprehension the question itself coincides with Actuality. And from this there result special possibilities of working out.

Before all else it is clear, without further words, that what I said before, namely, that each of the three strings makes Actuality-music on its own account, and at the same time at its own expense and risk, holds good above all of this mode of comprehending things. Nowhere is own expense and risk so great as here, where consciousness itself is worked up into Actuality. With the two other strings there must be a coinciding between possibility and thinkability ; either their rationality must first be created, or the irrationality of both must first be believed. Here there exists in advance identity between possibility and thinkability ; and it is a question neither of the creation of rationality nor irrationality, but of the living experience of this identity between consciousness and Actuality. And

thereby one may arrive at noteworthy discoveries, if the representatives of this school once get ready to think out their doctrine of Actuality in all its consequences. Everything here justifies itself through itself, inasmuch as it is solely through a man's living experience that Actuality becomes itself and leaves no standpoint and no criterion according to which one might be able to discriminate between good and bad, truth and error. These, in this comprehension of things, are all cast-off things belonging to a time when, between Actuality and the knowledge of it, there still existed a cleavage, and the knowledge of Actuality, *i.e.* consciousness, had Actuality as a fixed point by which it could, and was obliged to, orientate itself. All this falls away where the knowledge of Actuality is itself raised to the rank of Actuality. Where consciousness itself, at its own expense and risk, is made Actuality, there, along with the fact Actuality, is also given its sovereignty. And all the worse for the world if it refuses to conform itself to this criterion.

Like the two other strings, this also can be worked out as well from the standpoint of Faith as from the standpoint of Science. Here also, as with the two other strings, the law of spiral winding may be observed. In the course of time the same mode of comprehending things is repeated, only viewed from a higher plane.

This comprehension of things was also, in the form of Faith, worked out in antiquity in the doctrine of Protagoras about *man as the measure of things*, *i.e.* I myself live out that which is right. At the present moment it takes a prominent place

in modern mental life as the doctrine of *Life as Mentation* put forward by Count Keyserling. It is the Protagorean standpoint, viewed from a higher plane.

I have dealt at length elsewhere with Count Keyserling and his philosophy, and will therefore abstain from going any farther into it here. Only thus much would I say in this place: Where life is understood as ultimately identical with the question *What is Actuality?* i.e. where life is mentation itself, with all its possibilities, there, in the end, mentation must become a *process of mentalising*. And as a matter of fact, Keyserling leaves to mentation nothing but this process of mentalising, only, unfortunately, he is unable to show the way thither. That which ought to become *the* great living experience remains a mere conceptual value; and meanwhile mentation remains an object of faith until it has become a living experience. The result is a faith which is distinguished from other forms of Faith in this, that it conceals within itself the prospect of a living experience which shall not be, as in the case of Faith-religions, an act of God's grace, but shall lie within the domain of mentation itself.

This living experience, up till now, has not been realised. Keyserling himself expressly admits that it has not been realised by himself. The question then arises: Is there any possibility that it ever at any time may be realised? In such a case, of course, the branding of the Keyserling philosophy as a doctrine of Faith were quite wrong. It then, in truth, would be a question not of a faith, but, as in Buddhism and Buddhist Saddhā, of an act of

confidence in the Teacher, who asks nothing but so much confidence as is necessary in order to gain living experience of what he points out and teaches.

Thus the question remains : Is the Keyserling doctrine of mentation so fashioned that it can become living experience ? To which the answer runs : Everything is possible that does not try to work with a contradiction in itself. And on the basis of this dictum I say with complete conviction : There is no possibility that what Keyserling calls mentation can become living experience, for the whole idea works with a contradiction in itself. If the process of mentalising is a mere expression of mentation, then it is no longer mentation itself. If, however, it is mentation itself, where is left the standpoint from which mentation, as such, becomes a living experience ?

Here it would be as with the old jesting question about Christopher and the Christ :

Christopher, he bore the Christ ;  
Christ, he bore the world complete.  
Where then, pray, did Christopher  
Find a place to put his feet ?

Consciousness bears mentation ; mentation bears the whole of Actuality. Where then, pray—when it becomes a living experience—does consciousness find a place for its feet ?

The Keyserling doctrine of mentation works with a contradiction in the preliminary assumption, and thereby reveals itself, not as a special instance of Buddhism, as which it otherwise might be explained, but as a special instance of Faith, with all the irrationality and fictiveness of Faith.

The scientific working out of this comprehension

of consciousness as Actuality is, at least according to its sense, what to-day is called psycho-analysis, a phenomenon to which also the law of spirals surely applies, the forerunner of which, however, on the corresponding lower thought-planes, I do not know.

The psycho-analyst has conceived the bold plan of transporting the consciousness to the phenomenal part of life, and thereby falls into the physical under-currents of the instinctive, while Keyserling falls into the metaphysical over-current of the mentations.

The establishment of instinct as the subconscious, the formulation of these instincts with regard to consciousness as "tendencies", is one of the most important forward steps taken by modern mental life, and the only actual forward step which modern mental life has taken independently, in the direction of Actuality, *i.e.* of Buddhism. Here one has arrived at the forecourt of consciousness, at that which does, in fact, stand before consciousness, and which the Buddha also teaches as such, the predispositions, the Sankharas, which in the ultimate understanding of them refer back to something behind themselves. But here the thread breaks. Consciousness by its nature is not only instinct, and springs out of the instincts; it is also mentation; and it will not do to follow it up only on one side. In the depths where both come together, where out of mentation flows instinct, out of instinct mentation, the solution must be found; and into those depths one does not penetrate with conceptual thinking.

After all, psycho-analysis also works with a contradiction in itself, with a contradiction in its results, inasmuch as, there where all consciousness



is projected into the phenomenal part of life, consciousness ought to become a mere object of consciousness, without leaving over any consciousness to which it could be object; and even the initial attempt at making consciousness phenomenal involves this contradiction in the outcome. I sum up the results of this rapid sketch of the mental life of mankind.

All mental life fluctuates between the two opposites, Faith and Science.

Faith in every form is a fiction, *i.e.* something which works with a contradiction in the premiss. Faith means to posit something which cuts off the antecedent conditions of its own existence. If Faith were right in its understanding of things there never would have been any possibility of the fact Faith.

*Science* in every form is *hypothesis*, *i.e.* something that works with a contradiction in the conclusion. To deal in science means to posit something that in the working out would cut the ground from under its own feet. If Science were right, in the long run no science could exist. It exists only so long as its hypothesis holds out.

Faith and Science change in their forms, according to what they are working out, *i.e.* according to whether they are working out Actuality as *object*, or as *subject*, or as *consciousness*.

There is an *object-faith*, a *subject-faith*, a *consciousness-faith*. And there is an *object-science*, a *subject-science*, and a *consciousness-science*. Object-faith is the belief in a god-creator who has made the world, Actuality, which now with regard to him is re-actuality; and this god-creator is cause

in itself with reference to the world as effect in itself.

This world, as pure reaction of God, is then the given object for a pure objective-scientific working out of Actuality as mass and motion. In this universe thinking and willing are to be interpreted as pure fall-processes, as in fact for believers they are a reaction of divine omnipotence. "Not my will but thine be done!" Along with a creation of God there is necessarily given non-freedom of will. And all the hair-splitting theories of theologians about how man can be neck and crop a creature of God and yet be free can change nothing on that point. Here it is a case of All or Nothing! If God is the creator of all that is, I should like to know what on earth those words mean if they do not take in also my thinking and willing. My parents make my body, the shoemaker my shoes, the tailor my coat; and to a god-creator there ultimately remains nothing over of me but only my thinking and willing. In this universe of pure re-actualities consciousness would have no place at all. Here there is only mass and fall-motion; and a consciousness for which this world were present *as such* could only be God.

*Subject-faith* is faith in a power of thinking in itself, with regard to which the organ of mentation would be mere reaction, and thereby, then, become the given object of subject-science which seeks to make the organ of mentation into a physical-sense object, as also everything else. In this universe consciousness is present; but it cannot enter into relations with its objects, either because it would be bound to a metaphysical power of thinking, and so

its premiss would cut off from itself the possibility of acting, or else because, in its total transference into the organ of mentation, itself would become object, and thereby, in its conclusion, would cut off from itself the possibility of action.

*Consciousness-faith* is faith in consciousness as a consciousness that itself is Actuality, and deals in Actuality at its own expense and risk.

I conclude this path through the jungle of world-views, a path which I have hewn out for myself with much labour of axe and knife, with the question that leads over into Buddhism :

*How must Actuality be fashioned in order to be present for itself as such, while yet remaining actual, and not incur the fate of an Actuality that is present as fiction, or an Actuality that is present as hypothesis ?*

Therewith I come face to face with the fact, *concepts*.

## SIXTH CHAPTER

### THE CONCEPT

IN the course of the development of the mental life of mankind there always comes a moment when thinking is confronted with the question : *What are the Concepts ?* Where do they originate ?

Mental life in this phase is called criticism, and takes a position midway between Faith and Science, and thereby, at the same time, a standpoint above both, inasmuch as Faith, like Science, works with the concepts. Hence, in the question, *What is the Concept ?* Faith, like Science, is seized at its root.

As this middle position, above Faith and Science, criticism is a sort of likeness of Buddhism, the pith of which, as will later be shown, also consists in this, that it answers the question, *What is the Concept ?* But that this criticism is only a likeness, a photograph, not to say a caricature, of Buddhism is proved herein, that it seeks to answer the question, *What is the Concept ?* through the concept itself.

Envisaged from the point of view of Faith, the concept becomes the expression of a power of conceiving given *a priori*, a concept "in itself", in the sense of something one-sided, limited exclusively to the subject, and as such, something which might be present also without its objective counterpart :

concept without a thing conceived ! That, as is obvious without further words, is a pure fiction, *i.e.* a contradiction in the premiss.

Envisaged from the standpoint of Science, the concept becomes a result of repeated encounters with Actuality, *i.e.* a something *a posteriori* to the relation between subject and object. Here forms, sounds, odours, flavours, contacts, have first to be present, and out of them then, *a posteriori*, the concepts have to be built.

But the concept is an entering into relations with oneself and demands substance, while pure relations between subject and object are as images in a mirror which, like all mirror-images, by no possible kind of treatment, not even by as multiplied an accumulation of them as one pleases, ever yield anything solid, existing in three dimensions. Either in the relations, forms, sounds, and so on, concepts already are contained in the plan—in which case they are no mere relations resembling mirrored images, and also cannot pass for the seeds of concepts ; or they are not contained therein, and in this case these relations can never yield concepts, though one should heap them up ever so much, and for ever so long.

With this consideration, the theory of the concept as an *a posteriori* to experience is proven to be pure hypothesis.

There remains the apparent third possibility, which within the domain of our science of thought is linked with the name of Kant and represents genuine criticism. For if one tries to answer the question, *What are the Concepts ?* in the manner of Faith, one is practising not criticism but Faith.

And when one tries to answer the same question scientifically, again one is practising not criticism but Science. But the nature of all actual criticism ought to consist precisely in this, that it does not, like Faith-Science in the face of Actuality, tie itself down fast and use a fixed route of march, but preserves that impartiality on the basis of which precisely one seeks to pass beyond Faith-Science.

The real, as also the only, subject of all criticism is the concept, as being that to which Faith and Science alike owe their provisional results ; and it is clear, without further words, that here mental life has reached the point where conceptual thinking fails it ; for that with the concept one should be able to grasp the concept is as unthinkable as it is impossible that a grip should grip itself, or the edge of a knife cut itself.

In the question, *What is the Concept ?* the utter poverty of all mental life is seized by the root. The concept, that upon which all mental life is founded, which is the means to comprehending, which throws up the so questionable results of Faith-Science, and which none the less, in boldly arrogant fashion, sets itself up as the court of judgment upon what is truth and error, now at last, when it has long been too late, when the coffers of mental life are full to overflowing with the results of the provisional mode of procedure, is to be tested as to its credentials ; and one observes that the means of doing so are lacking. With salt one can salt everything except the salt itself. In the same way, with the concept one can comprehend everything except what alone matters to the actual thinker, *the concept*.

For whether that which stirs me to joy and sorrow, to fear and hope, to willing and non-willing, in short, that which keeps me unceasingly active and stirring,—whether all this has a real right to do so entirely depends upon what it is in Actuality. But I do not know it as that which it is in Actuality, but only as that as which I apprehend it, without knowing how I come to do so. In truth, there are present only unbroken processes of growth which do not exhibit the segments and sections which the concepts feign to find in them. In truth, the process of growth offers not the tiniest crack into which the dissecting knife of the concept might be inserted; *there is uninterrupted growth, and nothing else.*

Hence I, the actual thinker, must become quite clear within myself that this entire machinery, this infinitely manifold play of activities, possesses provisional value only, in truth and actuality is not at all to be taken seriously until I know whence originates the right of the concept to introduce disparate segments into the continuous processes of growth. That saying of Epictetus: "Men are not affected by things themselves, but by their opinions (concepts) of things", is certainly true. And it may well be that all this traffic in concepts may find an inglorious end in a new, correct insight, as many a noble mind indeed anticipates, and has anticipated.

Ah! of turmoil I am weary,  
From this pain and joy would rest.  
Peace the sweetest, peace the sweetest,  
Come, O come, into my breast.

But this sweet peace cannot come until the dissension between concept and Actuality with which all mental

life sets in is made clear ; and this dissension cannot be made clear until the relationship between concept and Actuality has been made clear ; whereupon, so long as this clarification is expected to proceed from conceptual thinking, that struggle for the standpoint sets in, which in another place I have depicted in all its hopelessness, and here again depict from another side.

The concept, taking it as a constituent part of Actuality, possesses this peculiarity in contradistinction to all other actualities, that a cleavage between Actuality and the knowledge of it here is not to be found. In the concept, taken as component of Actuality, Actuality and the knowledge thereof coincide. To this pure theoretical fact corresponds in actual practice the fact that every one awakes to Actuality with the perception of the unity of concept in the subjective sense (the conceiving), and concept in the objective sense (the conceived). There is no such thing as concept without being conceived, or thing conceived without concept.

Hence there is no room whatever for conceptual traffic between concept in the subjective sense and concept in the objective sense. Concept *is* the unity of subjective-objective ; and whoever deduces thence priority either for the subjective constituent or for the objective constituent is simply acting with partiality, in the former case towards fiction, in the latter case towards hypothesis. There is no conceptual mode of procedure whereby one might get at the concept ; and this, not because it is an absolute incomprehensibility, but because in it Actuality and the knowledge thereof, which everywhere else form a gap and thereby make possible a traffic (to



be sure, also a self-traffic), here are a unity, and offer no room for any kind of conceptual traffic whatsoever. *It is not the answer that is wanting, but the possibility of putting the question.* Here every putting of the question is itself again concept; and presupposes that, the comprehension of which is the very subject under discussion. We have reached the point at which all mental life, all our ceaseless labour, comes to a standstill, and in itself would have to come to a standstill, if partiality like some chivalrous knight did not leap in and, with grace and presence of mind, help us out of, and over, the dead point threatening the whole system. The expedients which Faith-Science offers as regards the fact, concept, are of too clumsy a nature to come under the consideration of the thinking man. The clumsy and unsatisfactory nature of both, which, where the possibility exists of retreating into the endless series, comes less to light, here where everything must be fought out on the spot, so to speak, stares us in the face. It is here as with dissonances on a pianoforte. What in widely separate octaves is bearable, in one and the same octave is unbearable. In the same way, a procedure which, in the boundless expanse of Actuality with its ever-changing results, is bearable, here, where everything runs its course within the concept itself, becomes unbearable. The concept stands neither the faith-fictive, nor the scientific-hypothetical, mode of treatment; it stands no mode of treatment whatever. Of it holds good the saying once uttered by a Jesuit general concerning his Jesuits: "*Sint ut sunt aut non sint*", they must be as they are, or not at all. With regard to the concept, to make attempts

at comprehending whether it is thus or so, means to salt the salt in order to find out how one must salt it in the endeavour to make a palatable dish of it.

So far as I can see and judge, the significance of Kant, not only for philosophy, but for the whole mental life of mankind, rests upon this, that at this point he comes forward as a helper in time of need, and discloses a new possibility between Faith and Science which, to be sure, possesses value only where it also stands above both Faith and Science.

The device which Kant provides consists in this, that he makes the concept neither the forerunner of objects, as does Faith, nor their aftermath, as does Science, but makes it a forerunner of itself, in his doctrine of the concept as resulting from forms of perception given *a priori*.

Here now at this point holds good what I said above, that criticism is, so to say, the likeness, the photograph of Buddhism. Buddhism too, by its nature, is criticism. The concept is indeed the only thing within Actuality with which, as said, Actuality and the knowledge of it, object and subject, are given as a unity. It is the only immediate Actuality there is. All other Actuality is mediate, because reaching us through the medium of the concept. Thus the concept is the real subject of all doctrine of Actuality; and every doctrine of Actuality, by its nature, is criticism. But herein is also shown whether a man is an actual thinker or nothing but a clever brain that makes a way out for itself where all seems lost.

An actual thinker is one who is quite clear on this point, that the concept does not permit of being approached through the concept itself. If I do not

ant simply to believe, *i.e.* take refuge in a fiction  
s regards the concept, or play the scientist, *i.e.* take  
efuge in a hypothesis, or as a sceptic or agnostic,  
seek an *otium sine dignitate*, I must try whether  
ere is not a non-conceptual way of becoming  
aster of the concept.

Buddhism, the path which the Buddha, in order  
o become Buddha, has trodden, his Bodhisattva-  
ood with its countless acts of renunciation, the  
ath of the bringing to rest of all acts of thinking,  
, briefly put, the creation, or rather the develop-  
ent, of this ultra-conceptual power of cognition,  
ot in the sense that by this development some  
ositive mind-structure is brought about beyond  
onceptual thinking, but in the sense that conceptual  
inking is set free from this tendency towards  
rasping ever germinating within it. Thinking, so  
ur as the uninstructed man of the world is con-  
erned, is always something growing, something  
rasping at what is outside itself (*viññānam  
irulhim*), the word grasping being understood  
oth in the corporeal and in the mental sense.  
he getting rid of this tendency towards grasping  
ound in conceptual thinking,—this is the develop-  
ent just mentioned. And this development re-  
quires mental training. There are trained concepts  
*ikkhā saññā*, Dīgha Nikāya 9), *i.e.* concepts which  
ave been rid of their tendency towards grasping,  
nd which by this mere fact bear within themselves  
he possibility of getting rid of conceptual contents  
together. Just as an angle when progressively  
larged up to the point of 360 degrees loses all possi-  
ility of any longer remaining an angle, so concep-  
ual thinking, when purified of the tendency towards

grasping by being purified from the Hindrances (*nivāraṇā*), becomes capable of advancing towards the Four Mental Concentrations (*Jhānā*), and thence, to the Four Infinitudes (*Anantā*). These latter are no positive addition to the mental structure as given with conceptual thinking, but only the gradually attained result of the training of the already given mental powers. I shall return to this later. Here I have only by way of comparison to confront Buddhism with the Kantian philosophy in so far as the latter is pure criticism. The Buddha was the actual thinker who, by a sacrifice of an unexampled character, forced the new way through for himself. Kant was the clever epistemological business man, who, by a trick, borrowed from Actuality, and so procured a breathing-space for distressed thought when already bankruptcy seemed inevitable.

The point in Actuality where Kant applied his credit-pump was there where, previous to him, no one yet had applied it, *time and space*.

If I understand the matter rightly, Kant derived the concepts from time and space as forms of perception given *a priori*. Thereby, of course, he moved in opposition to the views of exact science which makes of time and space positive values, these namely—that in which the processes run their course (fall-time), and that in which masses move (fall-space).

Instead of this, Kant makes time and space into mere forms of perception, *i.e.* he transfers them, with a push, out of objective, into subjective, Actuality. But this opposition is only an apparent one. In truth both views coincide in this, that they

make of time and space an ingredient which is necessary in order to make the dish, Actuality, palatable.

It is here, only in reverse, as in the anecdote which Plutarch narrates about Pompey's cook. Once at a banquet, when Pompey expressed his astonishment at the superabundant choice of meat dishes on the table, his cook explained the miracle to him in these words: "All the same meat, only the sauces are different". The other way about, here with Actuality the word is: "All the same sauce (time and space), only the meat in them is different".

In the time and space sauce, every roast has a place, all the same whether I take the sauce positively as does exact science, or ideally as does Kant. In both cases time and space is an ingredient of the dish, Actuality; and in both cases time and space demand the concept. With exact science it is required in the objective aspect, as the conceived; with Kant, in the subjective aspect, as the concept.

Time and space in the positive sense are only present where there are conceived masses which have space between them, and need time in order to fall through this space. Since, however, these conceived masses, as shown, are of a purely hypothetical character, so also the whole time and space doctrine of science is of a hypothetical character.

Just as the objective world-picture of exact science, as pure re-actuality, implies God as cause, so also at the same time it implies time and space in the form of a tenet of faith, namely, as eternity, *i.e.* as a something beyond empirical time and space.

The reciprocity business which is carried on under the rose between Faith and Science makes its presence known here also. It is only time and space as positive values—all one whether understood in the absolute sense, with Newton, or in the relative sense, with Einstein—which imply as their correlate eternity.

To both these extremes stands opposed Kant, in that he surprisingly turns the tables, and traces back, not time and space to the concept, but the concept to time and space; and thereby, with a sort of juggler's trick, or a kind of fraudulent business transaction by which a person under another name procures for himself a loan, he traces back the concept to itself.

Here is not the place to follow up farther the spun-out threads. I conclude this exposition with the hint that the mental life of mankind on this point has, in fact, a double entry. In part the relations between subject and object are taken as pure relation values, resembling mere images in a mirror, and thereby they are turned into a purely *internal* concern of Actuality; in part they are taken as concepts; *i.e.* as a means to the comprehension of Actuality, and thereby there is made out of them an *external* position with regard to Actuality, according to what the circumstances require.

By the Kantian philosophy nothing is altered in this double-entry system. It touches neither the nature of the concept nor that of time and space; it does nothing but relate the concept to itself under another name, so as to borrow a loan for itself. Neither about the nature of the concept, nor yet

about the nature of time and space, is anything whatever thereby said. Both remain correlative values. And what time and space are, I shall know only when I know what the concept is, in the objective as in the objective sense.

The fact, *concept*, is the point at which all mental life comes to a standstill within itself; and yet, not dumb with awe as in the presence of a higher, but as before that with which one stands on an equal footing, before that also which stands on an equal footing with oneself, and which one cannot get at, not because it stands too high, but because with regard to it the standpoint is lacking, and because it shares in every change of standpoint.

Here, however, is also the point where the actual thinker penetrates the fact that salvation lies, not in a new, as yet unexhausted attempts at conceiving—already these are all embraced along with this insight and found wanting—but that it lies in ceasing from all attempts at conceiving, and in patient acceptance of instruction until the new foundation is grown upon which the concept can go on working further, so far as there may be any need for the same.

There can be no doubt that the concept is the means to conceiving; but it is so only with reference to the conceived; and how this conceived has ever been able to come about, upon this it says nothing, because both, in point of time, are alongside one another, and one can speak neither of a priority of the concept as regards the conceived, as does Faith, nor of a posteriority of the concept as regards the conceived, as does Science. Just as two complementary colours are present as a timeless simul-

taneity, so with my awaking to Actuality *as* such, concept and conceived are present as a timeless simultaneity ; and as to which is in the right, the concept or Actuality, in the conflict between the two,—about this the concept itself can never say anything.

With this impossibility and unthinkability of criticism, that is to say, of a path upon which the concept, with reference to itself, could make attempts at conceiving, we have reached that ultimate point at which all mental life comes to a standstill in itself, and where agnosticism and scepticism would be unavoidable if—there were no Buddhism !

As long as this conflict between concept and Actuality is not decided, the god-creator is just as much in the right as the world-mechanism ; thinking as a metaphysical power in itself is just as much in the right as thinking as a function of matter ; consciousness as mentation is just as much in the right as consciousness as instinct ; and fiction is just as much in the right as hypothesis.

If now with this I enter into the Buddhist doctrine of Actuality, it is with this preliminary remark that, as in the exposition of mental life it was not my task to exhibit this mental life according to its contents but only in its relation to Buddhism, it equally is not my task to exhibit Buddhism according to its contents—that must be left to a later work—but only in its relation to the mental life of mankind.

That is the reason why I approach it with a question which is understandable, not through itself, but only through my exposition up to this point. That question runs :



*How must Actuality be fashioned in order to be present as such, and yet remain Actual, i.e. without thereby incurring the fate of becoming either fiction or hypothesis?*

Whereupon the answer which shatters all that has hitherto been taught, and to the actual thinker the truly shattering answer of the Buddha, runs: *It must wholly and entirely become nutrition! Sabbe sattā ahāratthitikā, All beings exist through nutrition* (Anguttara Nikāya V., p. 55).

With this there takes place the first great transformation in the search for Actuality, as well in respect to the object as in respect to the method. If hitherto in all those attempts to become by mere knowing master of Actuality—attempts which, summarising them, one calls the mental life of mankind—the world-whole was the object of this search, because this search took place only upon the path of science, now the world becomes the object of the search for Actuality in so far as it becomes a living experience for itself. Here in advance must be met the objection that hereby is given only a limited section of Actuality, which leaves in obscurity everything round about and outside it. This section does not get cut out of the whole, but as living experience it cuts itself out, and thereby is not a part of the whole, taking the whole of Actuality as an existent thing, but it is a prototype, an ideal specimen of Actuality. Here, in every process of nutrition, Actuality is vitally experienced as that which in its nature it is—nutrition. Out of the absolute, irrational understanding of things, of Faith, out of the relative, rational understanding of things, of Science, I, the

actual thinker, have passed into the reflexive understanding of things, of Buddhism, which refers things back to oneself, and with this, to the duties that follow from this understanding.

On this point the actual thinker must be clear from the very outset, that with Buddhism he steps into a world which neither must be believed, nor yet can be proved, but lives itself out as nutrition, and *as* such, must be lived out.

*What is nutrition ?*

Here also, as everywhere, there is a believing, as also a scientific, understanding of things. Science says : Nutrition is nothing but a form, a special instance, of drawing near, as every one may experience in the taking of food. An object of nourishment, a piece of bread, is, as a corn-field, for example, at a great distance. As baked grain it comes within reachable proximity to me. By purchase it moves into my possession. Through eating it finally becomes incorporated into me. Thus the distance between it and me becomes ever smaller and smaller, until finally in the process of digestion it becomes infinitesimal.

But this is the ultimate stage to which, from its standpoint, Science is able to get. Eating remains always a form of drawing near ; and the process of assimilation also must be interpreted as a form of drawing near, to be precise, as its infinitesimal form. And how from thence it comes to actual, honest egoising, to identification with the eating *I*, Science is unable to say. The interval between eater and nutrition, with which Science makes its start, remains standing, even if it becomes infinitesimal and thereby, practically a value that may

be eliminated, or, as Science says, becomes a negligible quantity. In short: The whole understanding of things, of Science, as everywhere, so also here, is hypothetical, *i.e.* something that in the ultimate reckoning, cuts the ground from under its own feet. It stops short for ever at the mere drawing near, the mere approaching; and how out of this, the actual nutrition, the incorporating, the identification between the subject "eater" and the object "food" can come about, this Science can never point out, and also never by any means dare point out, because thereby she would do away with the conceptual antecedent condition of the whole process, and cut the ground upon which the whole process runs its course from under her own feet. The conceptual antecedent condition is the assumption here of an eater as subject, a food as object, both which, in the process of identification between eater and food, could not remain in existence.

Whereas Science says: Nutrition is an approach, *i.e.* a fall between two objects, the object eater and the object food; Faith says: Nutrition is the active function of a doer, just as thinking is the active function of a thinking subject in itself. Thinking and eating are two quite opposite functions, but belonging to one subject in itself. But as the subject in itself, *i.e.* as something absolute, would remain for ever cut off from its object, and its perfection as subject in itself would have to be paid for with the impossibility of its manifestation, so also here a subject in itself purchases its pure subject-nature with its absoluteness, that is to say, it cuts off from itself the possibility of entering into

relations with its object, be it with reference to thinking, be it with reference to eating.

Thinking and eating, whatever else they may be, in any case are relations, and thereby a contradiction in itself of a subject in itself which might be able to manifest all its incomprehensible powers only "in itself" alone, and not with reference to an object; because, simply with its manifestation on an object, it would be all over with its absoluteness. To be sure, what sort of own body that could be on which the subject in itself could manifest itself we may leave to the philosophers and believers to puzzle out between them. Grasped in purely conceptual-fictive fashion, the case stands thus: Either there is a subject in itself, in which case there is no relation to an object, be it as thinker, be it as eater; or there is relation to an object, in which case there is no subject in itself. In short: Faith works with a contradiction in the premiss: it is fiction. If Faith were right, then eating could never come about at all; and if Science were right, eating could not remain in existence, inasmuch as in the process of eating, the constant approach would abrogate its own antecedent condition—the distance between the subject eater and the object food—as soon as the approach really had reached the point of a falling of the pair into each other.

Here also, as everywhere, Buddhism stands in the middle, and above both Faith and Science.

Briefly summarised, what the Buddha teaches is this:

Nutrition is neither a mere approach, a fall between objects, running its course in accordance with the merely mechanical law of endosmosis and

diosmosis, nor yet the automatic function of an *I*-subject, but a *grasping*<sup>1</sup> *process*. That unexampled inversion of all values begins in which the concept, the consciousness, remains neither the function of a metaphysical *I* nor a mirrored image, void of content, between subject and object, but becomes a process of nutrition, becomes the decisive phase of the process of nutrition—decisive, because in it not only is decision made as to the nature of consciousness itself, but simultaneously as to the nature of subject and object. For, where the concept which hitherto has been looked upon, and used, only as mediator between subject and object, and therewith at the same time, as a standpoint with regard to both, becomes actual process, becomes process of nutrition, there subject and object no longer remain objects, fundamental values in themselves, but they become objects of nutrition, are swept away into the process of nutrition; and thereby, from being the realities for which they hitherto have passed—on one hand as the metaphysical reality of an *I*-self, on the other hand as the physical reality of the object—they become actualities.

The making actual, the actualisation, of the ingredients of Actuality in the process of nutrition, that, stated in brief, is *Buddhism*. To set forth this actualisation is my task in the following pages; and the next question which results therefrom is this: How must I be fashioned if nutrition is a grasping process?

<sup>1</sup> The word "grasping" is here used in its original double meaning, as Grasping in a mental, as well as a physical, sense; for it is to be noted that in the Buddha's teaching physical grasping and mental grasping, in their essence, both turn out to be forms of nutrition.

## SEVENTH CHAPTER

### THE EGO

ALL conceptual envisagement of Actuality includes this, that the world is my, the envisager's, object, that there exists that gap between it and the envisager which, in creating a standpoint towards Actuality, creates at once the possibility and the impossibility of conceiving.

The suggestive power of this starting-point, which gives in refusing, refuses in giving, lays low all mental life in the ordinary sense, *i.e.* so far as they are not Buddhism. We succumb to the suggestive force of this starting-point as exhibited in the fact, concept and conceived. We make use of the capital that is given with this starting-point, without troubling about the solution of the absolutely necessary question as to whence this mental working capital originates, and whether it has at all the right to serve as mental working capital. We let this working capital bear interest, and again interest, in the throwing out ever and again of new conceptual values. We rejoice over our steadily increasing riches; we are proud of our progress; and do not know that the final outcome by which all conceptual thinking is threatened, whether in the logical-rational form of Science, whether in the

paralogical-irrational form of Faith, is the contradiction in itself.

Actuality with its endless series, *i.e.* its unity of conceivability and inconceivability, is a problem which provides thought with endless matter for reflection, without ever, through itself, giving an answer to the searcher and ponderer. To come to a decision here, be it in the way of Faith, be it in the way of Science, means to make an inextricable knot of it; and, astonishingly, the purely rational understanding of Actuality, as practised by Science, escapes this entanglement, *i.e.* the contradiction in itself, just as little as the purely irrational understanding of Faith; only, the hypothetical procedure of Science works with a contradiction in the conclusion, while the fictive procedure of Faith works with a contradiction in the premiss.

In the scientific envisagement of Actuality, *i.e.* in the application of conceptual thinking to Actuality as the standard of measurement, it is as if one applied a tangent to a circle. The further one follows it up, all the wider becomes the intervening space between it and Actuality, all the more diluted is the content of Actuality in what is worked up, until finally we are left, along with pure logic, to the contradiction in itself. For pure logic is only possible where no content of Actuality any longer disturbs its employment; and that is the case only where it disavows itself to itself by convicting itself of its own contradictory nature.

The contradiction in itself, the convicting itself of its own contradictory nature, is the highest, and the final, conclusion of all conceptual thinking. Just as millstones, after they have expelled all the

grain that lay between them, begin to grind themselves, so does logic grind itself after it has expelled all Actuality, and has become "pure logic", "pure thinking", inasmuch as this condition, or process, in which conceptual thinking takes itself as its object, also *of necessity* must be a contradiction in itself, regardless of the contents of its own thinking.

The actual thinker from all this draws the conclusion that the strictness of logic is no proof of the correctness of the object dealt with, but is only a proof that somewhere, somehow, one has lost the living connection with Actuality, and now, without this connection, goes on building until the contradiction in itself reveals the concealed error in the starting-point; and the concealed error in the starting-point rests always and everywhere upon this, that one works with the concepts without having become clear as to the source from which this mental business capital springs.

Thus, for the actual thinker, from this contradiction in itself in which all logical thinking ends, there results on one hand this, that the concept is not a means to conceiving in the sense in which all mental life, Faith and Science, as also Criticism, understand it. Certainly the concepts are a means to conceiving; but they are so only where there is a conceived. On the other hand, it follows from the contradiction in itself that conceptual thinking is not a standpoint *over against* Actuality, and, as such, a standpoint in its strictly fictive sense, such as the word "point", for example, has in Euclidean geometry,—a something that itself has no magnitude, a purely ideal value, a pure means for the



comprehending of Actuality without itself being Actuality.

Something that can become a contradiction in itself, that, as contradiction in itself, can enter into relations with itself, is no mere ideal point, devoid of magnitude. In order to get an immanent motion, *i.e.* that of a turning of itself against itself, there must be actual content. The concept ceases to be a standpoint in regard to Actuality in the pure ideal sense of a mere means to the conceiving of Actuality, but instead it becomes Actuality itself. The mere rôle of intermediary between subject and object, in the sense of a relation-value resembling an image in a mirror, given with both, has ceased. The beautiful symmetrical trinity has ceased in which Actuality distributes itself over objects as Father, over the subject as Son, while consciousness, as Holy Ghost hovering between the two, may look out for itself as to where it belongs and can find a footing. In order that the concept itself may make a claim to Actuality, the assured existence of subject and object as the bearers and monopolists of Actuality is shattered; and the first shadows of a new order of things descend upon the whole. *The drama of the Buddhist doctrine of Actuality sets in;* and it sets in so that Actuality may be grasped where alone, not only as *an object* of consciousness it is to be grasped, but where as *consciousness*, as *concept*, it gains a living experience of itself.

Among the countless single actualities there is for each individual *one* which is accessible to him, not only through the medium of the concepts, but which is immediately accessible as living experience—*his own I!*

In the thinking of the naïve, I and subject coincide. The first check as regards this supposed identity comes in with the consideration that by no means everything in the *I* is subject, but that that in the *I* which is sense-perceptible, the form, to me the *I*, is quite as objectively present as to others. There begins an objectivising process, or, what is the same thing, a "dis-subjectivising" and "dis-egoising" process which, with the increase of reflection, penetrates ever deeper and deeper. This reflection, as every one can immediately experience, has nothing to do with conceptual thinking, but is an immediate apprehending of the constituents of Actuality.

This process of objectivising which sets in with what exhibits itself in me as sense-perceptible, the corporeal form, if sufficient reflection is present, passes beyond what I call my inner life. Sensation, perception, the concepts, are also present for me *as such*, i.e. as objects of consciousness; and as the last place of refuge for the *I*-subject, there remains consciousness itself.

Here in consciousness takes place the all-decisive decision as to whether the process of objectivising shall proceed farther, and consciousness be included therein, or whether it breaks on consciousness as an *I*-subject, as the wave breaks on the rock.

That the decision on this point cannot issue from consciousness itself is clear without further words. Consciousness, when it questions itself as to what it is, answers only with an *I am I*, that is to say, with a pure relation value which proves itself such through this, that in it subject and object are

exchangeable. For whether in this *I am I* I call the first *I* subject, and the second object, or *vice versa*, is a matter of indifference; and so, for the actual, the unprejudiced thinker, the phrase says nothing save that here conceptual thinking fails us, because we are here confronted, not with an inconceivability in itself, but with conceiving itself.

If thus Faith interprets the phrase *I am I* in the sense of a self-identifying *I*, an *I*-in-itself, it works with a fiction; inasmuch as an *I*, a subject in itself, in entering into relations with itself, would itself become object, and lose its character of subject. And if Science seeks to interpret the *I am I* in the sense of a purely physical, objective process of equilibration, it works with a hypothesis, inasmuch as a purely objective *I*, in order to enter into relations with itself, would itself become subject, and its objectivity would be lost.

With this, *I*, the actual thinker, have reached the point at which thinking comes to a standstill in itself. I have come to that ultimate outpost to which of its own strength thinking can come; I have come to the final exclusion of all conceptual possibilities. The *I am I* does not point to a metaphysical *I*-self, and is not the expression of an absolute inconceivability. It also does not point to a physical *I*, and is not the expression of a purely relative inconceivability. But it points merely to itself, to the consciousness; and therewith it becomes the expression of a self-related, reflexive, conceptual inconceivability. Actuality, from being the objective problem it was when viewed from the outside, has become *problem in itself*. It ends neither as affirmation nor as negation,

but in a relation to itself which, as such, is neither a matter of faith nor yet a matter of proof, but a matter of instruction.

I, the actual thinker, have come to the point at which thinking itself demonstrates the impossibility of becoming by its own strength master of Actuality. All search for Actuality ends, there where Actuality begins, in the *I*; and of this *I*, in the course of the search for Actuality, there remains nothing over but this *I am I*, with regard to which a conceiving, a conceptual relation, is impossible, not because we have here to do with an inconceivability in itself, but because this *I am I* is already a conceptual relation. And where one stands, thither one cannot go; and where one is, thither one cannot come.

If, in the search for Actuality, the necessary impartiality prevails which opposes the fictive procedure of Faith just as much as it does the hypothetical procedure of Science, there remains as sole possibility *the impulse of instruction*, that is to say, *the Buddha-word*, and its great irreplaceable gift.

*Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti,*

Of all gifts the best is the gift of the Doctrine.

And the teaching which the Buddha gives upon this conceptual inconceivability of the *I am I* is this, that it is neither the immediate metaphysical relation of identity, nor the mediate mechanical relation of a physical process, but the immediate-mediate relation, the simultaneous - successive (*paticca-sam*) process of nutrition, a process of growth.

All nutrition is an entering-into-relation; and this *I am I*, as an entering-into-relation with

oneself, is nothing but a special instance of nutrition, that special instance in which the *I*, by entering into relation with itself, excludes an *I*-self, that unity of ignorance and knowledge which, inaccessible to itself as such, constitutes *the* subject matter of instruction, the entrance point of the Buddha's doctrine.

## EIGHTH CHAPTER

### NUTRITION AS LIVING EXPERIENCE

My task, the task of the actual thinker, now formulates itself as the turning of nutrition into a living experience.

Life, looked at in other living beings, is nothing but nutrition ; nutrition is that which life remains to life itself. Through the process of nutrition, through the power of maintaining itself, life proves itself to be life. The insufficiency of the merely scientific mode of understanding things resides only herein, that by this, the scientific path, the sufficient cause of nutrition is not accessible. For to say that the sufficient cause of nutrition is the food-stuffs, bread, and so forth, that I introduce into my body is as little to the purpose as to say that the sufficient cause of a flame is the fuel there present. Fuel creates no flame ; it only maintains it. And in the same way, the means of nourishment do not produce nutrition, but only maintain it. Nutrition goes on through the grasping of nourishment, but nothing is thereby said as to the sufficient cause of the same.

Thus the task is : Out of this limited, scientific understanding of it, to translate the fact, nutrition—as which life exhibits itself for mere knowing—into

living experience, *i.e. to make nutrition living experience.*

Hence the actual thinker sees clearly in advance that this task, understood actually, includes the requirement of including along with it the standpoint from which I have living experience of myself as process of nutrition, *i.e. the knowledge, the recognition of myself as process of nutrition. Not only do I eat, but I also know that I eat.* And so long as this knowledge of myself as a process of nutrition remains a standpoint outside itself, *i.e. outside this process of nutrition*, nothing is gained. It remains a matter of mere knowledge; and that which alone is of importance, the great change from mere knowing to living life, has not taken place at all.

But that this change is possible, must be possible, mere knowledge itself furnishes an indication, in showing that this standpoint from which I experience myself as process of nutrition, has only itself grown with the process of nutrition in the course of self-supporting development.

There was a time when I was not present for myself *as* a process of nutrition, in the state of embryo, or of new-born babe, when, thus, I could speak, neither of myself as a process of nutrition, nor yet of a standpoint towards it. This standpoint is developed solely on the basis of progressive nutrition, so that, in pure correlative knowledge, it is present there only where I am present for myself *as* process of nutrition. Hence, the standpoint from which I conceive myself *as* process of nutrition goes along with nutrition, is the outcome of nutrition; and if it is used as standpoint, it can

happen only with this reservation. In truth, what we have before us here is nothing but a special case of nutrition which lays upon the actual thinker the task of experiencing it as such.

That by mere knowing myself as a process of nutrition nothing is gained proceeds from the fact that this experience can be interpreted according to Faith, with the same right as according to Science.

Both views coincide in this, that they use the standpoint from which I recognise myself as a process of nutrition for the interpretation of this fact. In what manner they do this has been shown in the foregoing. Faith makes out of it the immediacy of the metaphysical *I*, the eater ; Science, the mediacy of a purely physical process of nutrition. Both coincide in this, that they neither of them arrive at living experience at all, but leave nutrition as that which it is outside among the other phenomena of life, an item of mere knowledge. Neither of the pair has ever got so far as even only to have understood the distinction between mere knowledge and living life, much less to have realised it.

Living experience, in the last analysis, means nothing else but to embrace the act of conceiving, the standpoint from which I conceive. My own seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking, are only forms of knowledge so long as they are comprehended *as* such from the standpoint of the *I*-concept,—forms of knowledge which, to be sure, are distinguishable from other forms of knowledge in this, that they do not happen in regard to any object, but in regard to the subject ; yet they are still forms of knowledge in so far as



they are objects of a conceptual standpoint. Living experience only sets in when this standpoint is swallowed up in the process of conceiving.

With this I stand before the portals of Buddhism ; and the actual thinker who knows himself armed with the necessary measure of impartiality, of patience, of confidence, may enter into this Doctrine, which is equally as far removed from the faith of religions as it is from the proofs of the sciences. "*There are beings but little covered with dust, who will be lost if they do not hear the Doctrine.*" For these beings, less covered with dust, the Buddha speaks. Before them he places the unexampled requirement of living experience, presupposing complete freedom from preconceived ideas, in which the hitherto so assured standpoint from which one conceived is swallowed up in the mass. It takes place, or ought to take place,—that truly and actually shattering, yea, sole shattering change in which the spectator of the play ceases to be spectator. And now himself becomes actor ? O no ! But in which spectator, actor, and stage are swallowed up in one, and nothing remains over but this process of nutrition without a nourished, but this seizing and grasping without a grasper, as which the Buddha exhibits life, and as which I now will try to exhibit it as well as I can.

I say "as well as I can", for here all is new land ; and in the attempt to set it forth ever new land is formed. That is to be well borne in mind when a man takes the great step out of the—according to his own standpoint—assured domain of conceptional thinking into the domain of living life, whose wealth does not reside in the fullness of

its results, but in freedom from preconceived ideas, in perfect candour, in readiness for sacrifice as regards oneself. In this domain there no longer is any standpoint, not even that with which the self-deceiving concept likes to dally—the standpoint of absence of standpoint! Here is only one thing, the cutting loose from every standpoint. Here life remains no standpoint, no *statio*, not even what Petrarch calls a *statio instabilis*; it becomes *possibility of ceasing*, and nothing more.

## NINTH CHAPTER

### THE FIVE GRASPING-GROUPS

WHAT, apart from all preconceived ideas, am I ?

In the Little Discourse, "Explanations" (Majjhima Nikāya 44), is to be found the following passage :

" ' Personality, personality, Venerable one, it is said. But what is it that the Exalted One has called personality ? ' "

" ' These five Grasping-groups, Brother Visākha, has the Exalted One called personality, namely, the Grasping-group Form, the Grasping-group Sensation, the Grasping-group Perception, the Grasping-group Sankharas, and the Grasping-group Consciousness. These five Grasping-groups has the Exalted One called personality. ' "

(Here I leave the word *Sankharas* untranslated in the meantime, for reasons which will be given later.)

What does this mean ?

For an understanding of it, I first of all draw upon the definitions of these five Groups given in the Texts.

" *And what, ye monks, is Form (rūpaṃ) ?* The Four Main Elements, and what through them is present as form—this, ye monks, is called Form.

“*And what, ye monks, is Sensation (vedanā)?* These six Sensation-bodies (*vedanā-kāyā*), namely : Sensation sprung from eye-contact, sensation sprung from ear-contact, sensation sprung from nose-contact, sensation sprung from tongue-contact, sensation sprung from body-contact, sensation sprung from thought-contact (*manosamphassajā vedanā*).

“*And what, ye monks, is Perception (saññā)?* The six Perception-bodies (*saññā-kāyā*), namely : Form-perception, Sound-perception, Smell-perception, Taste-perception, Contact-perception, Thing-perception (*dhamma-saññā*).

“*And what, ye monks, are the Sankharas?* These six bodies of mental tendencies (*cetanā-kāyā*; *cetanā* = purposive thinking, and as said, is mentioned by the Buddha as synonymous with Kamma, action), namely : Form-concepts (*rūpasañcetanā*), Sound-concepts, Smell-concepts, Taste-concepts, Contact-concepts, Thing-concepts (*dhamma-sañcetanā*).

“*And what, ye monks, is Consciousness (viññāṇam)?* These six consciousness bodies (*viññāṇa-kāyā*), namely : Eye-consciousness, Ear-consciousness, Nose-consciousness, Tongue-consciousness, Body-consciousness, Thought-consciousness (*mano-viññāṇam*).” (Khandha Samyutta 56, and elsewhere.)

The whole, in brief, is an *analysis of the I*, taking the word “analysis” in the strictest sense as that which it expresses : a dissolution. This apparently unitary *I* is broken up into a number of layers, somewhat as in a burning flame a number of layers of colour can be distinguished. And just as these layers of colour of the flame are not parts, not

something laid, after the fashion of the pieces in a mosaic, alongside one another, but are a continuous, unbroken process of action, so also is it with the Five Groups (*khandhā*), of which it is expressly said that they are a *burning*. "The Form, ye monks, is a Burning (*rūpam ādittam*), Sensation is a Burning, Perception is a Burning, the Sankharas are a Burning, Consciousness is a Burning." (Khandha Samyutta 61.) In all of them an arising and a passing away is to be cognised; in short: *they are not parts of a whole, of an I*, but forms of action. They are the different modes in which the *I* enters into relation with the external world, lays hold of this external world, seizes it; they are the process of mental-corporeal nutrition, on the basis of which the *I* is present and maintains itself.

I do not stand in immediate relations with the external world as a metaphysical *I*-subject which is endowed *a priori* with the power of cognising and eating, of thinking and willing. I also do not stand to it in the mediate relation of a purely physical process, in which the *I* only builds itself up *a posteriori*, on the basis of continued experiences. But I stand to it, the external world, in the immediate-mediate relation of nutrition, in which the corporeal, as well as the mental, form of Grasping fall together into one conceptual unity.

The *I* as process of Grasping is something which the Buddha calls a *non-self* (*an-attā*). *Anattā*, translated, means non-metaphysical; *attā* (Sanskrit *ātman*) is the term used for the metaphysical, eternal, self-existent Self, the soul, such as, according to Faith's understanding of things, constitutes the kernel of the *I*. According to Buddhist teaching,

there is no such thing. The *I* is neither a metaphysical *I*, nor a purely physical process, but a *Grasping* process, which is neither sensuous-physical nor supersensuous-metaphysical, but is that as which it is lived out, simply a *Grasping in the mental-corporeal sense*, in the immediate-mediate sense.

Of this *I*, as mental-corporeal process of Grasping, hold good the three words characteristic of all Actuality.

“What do you think, ye monks? Is Form permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, Lord!”

“But what is impermanent, is that painful (*dukkha*) or pleasant (*sukha*)?”

“It is painful, Lord.”

“But what is impermanent, painful, changeable—is it right to regard that as, ‘This belongs to me, this am I, this is my self (*attā*)?’”

“No, Lord.” (Khandha Samyutta and elsewhere.)

The like schema is then repeated with regard to sensation, perception, the Sankharas, and consciousness.

The Buddha teaches me that I consist wholly and entirely of the Five Grasping-groups. If this is so, all that Actuality offers must be found in them. The whole of Actuality is, as already shown, *itself and the knowledge of it*. Actuality is present, and I know that it is present. It is itself present; and it is present *as* such, conceptually. It is life itself, and it is also the mere knowing of life.

Hence, before all else, these questions arise: Do the Five Khandas reproduce this whole? Do

they embrace Actuality as well as the knowledge of it ?

In the Khandha Samyutta 3, we read : “ The form-mode (*rūpa-dhātu*) is the home (*oko*=house, refuge, resting-place) of consciousness. The consciousness not bound by the craving after the Form-mode is called ‘ home-going ’ (*okasārī*). Sensation—Perception—the Sankharas, are the home of consciousness. The consciousness not bound by the Sensation-mode—the Perception-mode—the Sankhara-mode, is called home-going.”

And further, the four first Khandhas (Form, Sensation, Perception, the Sankharas) are called the four *Consciousness-standpoints* (*viññāṇaṭṭhitiyo*).

In the Khandha Samyutta 54, we read :

“ These five seed-born things there are, ye monks. Which five ? Those growing from a root, those growing from a stem, those growing from sprouts, those growing from knots, and those growing from seeds. If, ye monks, these five seed-born things were present undamaged, not rotted, not destroyed by wind and heat, fresh, well-preserved, but earth were not present, but water were not present, could these five seed-born things, ye monks, come to growth, spread, increase ? ”

“ No, Lord.”

“ If, ye monks, these five seed-born things were present, damaged, rotted, destroyed by wind and heat, not fresh, not well preserved, but earth were present, but water were present, could these five seed-born things, ye monks, come to growth, spread, increase ? ”

“ No, Lord.”

“ If, ye monks, these five seed-born things were

present, undamaged, not rotted, not destroyed by wind and heat, fresh, well-preserved, and earth were present, and water were present, could then these five seed-born things, ye monks, come to growth, spread, increase ? ”

“ Yea, Lord ! ”

“ Just like the earth-mode, ye monks, are the Four Consciousness-standpoints to be regarded. Just like the water-mode, ye monks, is the lust for pleasure to be regarded. Just like the five seed-born things, ye monks, is consciousness, the nutritive (*sāhāraṇ*), to be regarded.

“ If, ye monks, consciousness should hold fast, clinging to the form, stayed upon Form as its point of rest, upon Form as its point of support, a pursuer of pleasure, then it would come to growth, spread, increase.

“ If, ye monks, consciousness should hold fast, clinging to sensation—perception—the Sankharas, stayed upon sensation—perception—the Sankharas, as its point of rest, as its point of support, a pursuer of pleasure, then it would come to growth, spread, increase.

“ If, ye monks, anyone should thus speak : ‘ I shall, apart from Form, Sensation, Perception, the Sankharas, make known a coming or going, or disappearing, or arising, or growth, or spread, or increase, of consciousness ’—any such thing is impossible.”

Exact science, in its purely hypothetical understanding of Actuality, is only an enjoyer of the fact that such a standpoint is present, and does not trouble its head as to where it resides. This is the first possibility.



Faith—here taken as Buddhist Faith, *i.e.* as Faith which unfortunately has chosen for its object precisely the Buddha-word—says: If all this, consciousness included, is not the Self (*attā*), then this Self *must* lie beyond all consciousness, beyond all conceivability, as a metaphysical *I* in itself, whose whole function consists in the act of cognition of Anattatā, of non-selfness, and which, simply through this act of cognition, *by logical necessity*, proves itself to be standing outside of it, outside of non-selfness, *i.e.* as an Atta.

The logic of such a conclusion is unimpeachable, irrefutable, and therein lies what is imposing and ensnaring in such an understanding of the position! Strictest logic! But—and this is to be well considered—the standpoint from which these “logicisms” are carried out, is a purely fictive one, because standing outside of Actuality. Actuality and the knowledge of it is all there is. And every attempt to comprehend it, standing outside of it, is fiction, and proves itself such, inasmuch as in this understanding of the matter the sufficient cause is lacking in virtue of which the five Khandhas run their course, since the Atta, standing outside of them, here plays no other rôle than that of pure cogniser of Anattatā.

Here Faith celebrates its ultimate triumph, in proving to itself its own necessity. The problem which all Actuality presents has become an inextricable knot, and has irrecoverably knotted itself into itself. On the one hand we have a cognition in itself, which is a subjective contradiction, an unthinkability; on the other hand, we have its object as a *perpetuum mobile*, which is an objective contradiction, an impossibility.

This is the punishment of him who makes of the Teacher and his Doctrine an object for the satisfaction of his craving to believe, unmitigated, uncooled, by the Buddha's own teaching. That man is furthest from the truth who uses it as an instrument of his own beliefs. He will attain nothing with this instrument but the irrefutable strictness of logical proofs, which is itself the surest token of the lack of all Actuality.

Logic is pure there only where it turns against itself and leads itself into absurdity.

This is the second possibility.

Thus we ask again : Where lies the standpoint from which I recognise the whole of Actuality as such, as a process of Grasping, and which, none the less, itself remains process of Grasping ?

The answer to this question is the *Doctrine of Consciousness*, wherein the drama of the Buddhist Doctrine of Actuality runs its course.

## TENTH CHAPTER

### CONSCIOUSNESS

WITH the question : " How is it possible to make an assertion about myself, since I am Actuality as well as the knowledge of it ? " I stand, as already said, face to face with the *problem in itself*, the problem consciousness.

The importance of this question, the necessity of its being answered, follows immediately from the fact that upon this answer depends the entire evaluation of what I conceive with consciousness.

The entire manner in which I react to the surrounding world, appraise it, does not at all depend upon things themselves, but upon the manner in which and as which I conceive them. When I regard a stick on the ground as a snake, a drop of dew as a diamond, my behaviour will depend upon my comprehension ; and right comprehension is that in which concept and object ought to coincide. All my sufferings, my joys, my exaltations, my despairs, my sorrows, my hopes, my fears, and so forth and so on, are all judgments of values with regard to Actuality, which are only justified if I know what consciousness is ; and which are only of a provisional character so long as I do not know that. The justification for all this only

begins when I know that things correspond to my concepts.

But this goal of mental life, the coinciding of concept and Actuality, remains something to which indeed I limitlessly approach, which, however, I never can reach. The goal towards which one strives, forever remains equally near, equally far, a chase after the horizon ; and its outcome is the endless series.

Hence all appraising of values on the part of men, also on the part of living creatures, so long as they do not know that on the basis of which they make their appraisal, remains something which resembles a vulgar fraction with an undetermined denominator. Let the figures in the numerator be as large as they please, the fraction amounts to nil if the denominator is nil.

Every doctrine of Actuality must be a doctrine of consciousness, start as a doctrine of consciousness. That, starting out from consciousness, a man can evaluate the world, is possible. That, however, starting with the world, a man can evaluate consciousness, is not possible.

Yet once more : What is consciousness ?

In this question is comprehended the whole wretchedness of mental life so far as it runs its course in mere conceptual knowing. In all conceptual knowing there comes about the opposition of concept and object. This opposition, as already shown, yields the possibility—at the same time also, however, yields the impossibility—of comprehending, inasmuch as the cleavage, once given, never more permits of being bridged.

This cleavage between concept and object with

which all mental life works, so long as it works with objects of consciousness, does not exist with the question, *What is consciousness?* as soon as one has the courage, and the freedom from prejudice, to understand this question as what it really is: the experience of the unity of concept and object.

Regarded with prejudice, the question, *What is consciousness?* does embrace a conceptual standpoint outside consciousness; regarded without prejudice it lives out in itself the power of consciousness, not only to become conscious of objects, but of itself; the power not only to embrace in its comprehension objects, but also itself. It *has* the power to comprehend, and *is* this power itself. For this no proof is required, no act of faith, but only freedom from preconceived opinion, and the courage to live out Actuality as that which it proves itself to be.

Consciousness is neither a function of a metaphysical *I*-self, and thereby a purely mental value; neither is it a function of matter, and thereby a purely physical value just like everything else; but it is that as which it is lived out—a grasping, which proves itself such in this, that it includes itself in its grasping, not in such a way that now with this there results the “itself” sought-for, as identity, as immediate Actuality, but in this fashion, that in this “including itself in its grasping” the “self” is excluded, and nothing remains but *the grasping*, which is neither mediate nor immediate, but, regarded without prejudice, is nothing but itself, the process of grasping.

*Hence consciousness is that which embraces the standpoint from which it is present as such; and in*

*self-consciousness I live out no confrontation and identifying of the "I", also no mere process of adaptation, which may or may not succeed, but a rolling on of the life-process in which the knowledge thereof that it is so rolls on along with it. In short : There is here a process of growth, with its immediate-mediate simultaneity and succession.*

Consciousness is neither a merely psychical thing, *i.e.* a standpoint outside of Actuality ; nor a merely physical thing, *i.e.* objective Actuality just like everything else ; it *is* not at all, but *becomes*.

Something *is*, means : It is an object of knowing, be it in the rational sense of a conceivability, as held by Science, be it in the irrational sense of an inconceivability, as held by Faith. Consciousness is not an object of knowing, neither in one sense nor the other ; and this, not because it lies beyond all knowing, but because it is *knowing itself*.

With this is carried through the great change which must be carried through in every one who makes claim to actual thinking—the change from mere knowing to life itself.

Consciousness is neither standpoint towards Actuality, nor is it Actuality as objectivity ; but it is Actuality as action, which means, something that *is* not, but which, in order to be present, first must ever spring up anew.

On this point every one must be clear who here makes any claim to pass for an actual thinker ; and on this point every one *can* become clear, if only he will observe himself without prejudice. Consciousness is not in any sense whatever a something that is, neither as a standpoint outside of Actuality, nor as an object within Actuality. It is

not an existent, within which the contents crowd one another, rush about like fish in a pond, or buzz all through one another like flies in a glass. But consciousness, the knowledge of Actuality, is an ever-repeated new Becoming, new upspringing, out of its antecedent conditions.

“ The uninstructed man of the world, ye monks, may well become weary of this body made up of the Four Chief Elements, cease to crave after it, become free from it. And why so ? In this body made up of the Four Chief Elements is verily to be seen gathering together and scattering, taking up and casting off. But what, ye monks, is called mind (*cittam*), thinking (*mano*), consciousness (*viññāṇam*), to become weary of this, to cease from craving after this, to become free from this, the uninstructed man of the world is not able. And why so ? For a long time through has the uninstructed man of the world held, clung, cloven, to the idea : ‘ This belongs to me, this am I, this is my self ’. But sooner, ye monks, ought the uninstructed man of the world to regard this body made up of the Four Chief Elements as the self, than the mind. And why so ? This body made up of the Four Chief Elements may last for a year, may last for two, three, four, five years ; may last for ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years ; may last for an hundred years and more. But what, ye monks, is called mind, or thinking, or consciousness—this, day and night, springs up as another, and as another passes away. Just as, ye monks, an ape, journeying along a forest slope, lays hold of one branch, then lets go and grasps another, even so also, ye monks, what is called mind, thinking, consciousness, day and night

springs up as another, and as another passes away.”  
(Khandha Samyutta 61, Samyutta Nikāya, pp. 94, 95.)

In the Mahātanhāsankhaya Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 38) we find the following passage :

“ Upon whatsoever basis, ye monks, consciousness springs up, according to that basis is it named. Upon the basis of eye and forms, consciousness springs up, and so, eye-consciousness that is called. Upon the basis of ear and sounds, consciousness springs up, and so, ear-consciousness that is called. Upon the basis of nose and odours, consciousness springs up, and so, nose-consciousness that is called. Upon the basis of tongue and tastes, consciousness springs up, and so, tongue-consciousness that is called. Upon the basis of body and contacts, consciousness springs up, and so, body-consciousness that is called. Upon the basis of thinking and things, consciousness springs up, and so, mind-consciousness that is called. In the same way, ye monks, a fire, on the basis of whatsoever it burns, by that is named. On the basis of logs of wood a fire burns, and so, a log fire it is called. On the basis of brushwood a fire burns, and so, a brushwood fire it is called. On the basis of grass a fire burns, and so, a grass fire it is called. On the basis of chaff a fire burns, and so, a chaff fire it is called. On the basis of rubbish a fire burns, and so, a rubbish fire it is called. Even so also, ye monks, on the basis of whatsoever it is that consciousness springs up, according to that is it named. On the basis of eye and forms springs up consciousness,” and so on.

    If consciousness is something that in order to be



present, first must ever and again spring up anew, then the antecedent conditions must also be present upon the basis of which it springs up. And, in fact, the Buddha teaches: "Without sufficient cause (*aññatṛa paccayā*) no consciousness arises".

As such he points out, on one hand, the internal antecedent conditions, the *internal points of support* (*ajjhāttikāni āyatanāni*), on the other, the *external points of support* (*bahirāni āyatanāni*). The internal points of support are the six powers of sense, namely: The power of sight (eye), the power of hearing (ear), the power of smell (nose), the power of taste (tongue), the power of feeling (body), and the power of thought (without definite organ).

To these correspond as the six external points of support, the several correspondences. To the eye correspond forms as things visible, possibilities of sight; to the ear, sounds, as things audible, possibilities of hearing; to the nose, smells, as things smellable, possibilities of smelling; to the tongue, tastes, as things gustible, possibilities of tasting; to the body, corporealities, as things touchable, possibilities of touching (*phoṭṭhabbā*); to thinking, things (*dhammā*), as things thinkable, possibilities of thought.

I see forms, I hear sounds, I smell odours, I taste flavours, I feel contacts, I perceive things. Things, *Dhammā*, imports all that corresponds to perception.

For example: I see something as a cube. I hear it (when cut) as a grinding. I smell it (when warmed) as a certain smell (for which I do not know the name). I taste it as sweet. I feel it as hard. And I perceive it as *sugar*.

As sugar, this something may be present without its being present so as to be grasped by the senses ; it may be present in a purely conceptual manner in the memory, as a purely thinkable thing. But also the form, the sound, the smell, the taste, the feeling may be present without the corresponding objectivity, as a pure, thinkable thing, the proof of which is this, that thinking, the capacity to perceive, has no definite organ as object but the whole, the *I*-process. This is also proven by the fact that for sight, and so on, the eyes, and so on, are not sufficient, but there must also be present the thinking apparatus. I do not see with the eyes, but with thought. And the reason for this is, as here in anticipation has to be said, that all this is nothing but shaped, enfolded consciousness.

Yet once more : Thing (*dhamma*) is everything that is, or can be, present as object of thought, as conceivability, independent of the sensuous-objective, in short, the concepts ; and as such, it is not an object of thought in the usual sense, but its form of development, through which then the development of consciousness comes about ; the whole being no rigid scheme of spatially given and separated opposites, but the outcome of a process of thought. For the forms, and so forth, also are not present in themselves, but only as the equivalent in thought of the eye, and so forth. In short : In the play of the internal and external points of support, there is not played a sort of mental multiplication after this schema : eye multiplied by form equals sight-consciousness, and so forth ; but there is played out a single process of grasping which exhibits an unbroken transition, not only in the

external direction, eye-form, and so on, but also in the inner direction, from the organs of sense (eye, and so on), to the organ of thought that embraces them all. Only when one has clearly grasped this will one understand that lack of clear-cut definitions which reduces the logician to despair, and experience it, no longer as a lack, but as a proof, of the actuality of the process. Actuality as growth, as nutrition, tolerates no definitions, no definitive drawers into which philosophy seeks to lock up Actuality. It is uninterrupted growth; and, for conceptual thinking, for logic, a lost fall, so long as one has not oneself experienced this conceptual thinking as a form of growth.

In the Nidāna Samyutta, page 73, we read as follows :

“ The arising and the passing away of the world will I show to you. In dependence on eye and forms springs up eye-consciousness—in dependence on ear and sounds springs up ear-consciousness—in dependence on nose and smells springs up nose-consciousness—in dependence on tongue and flavours springs up tongue-consciousness—in dependence on body and contacts springs up body-consciousness—in dependence on thinking and things springs up thought-consciousness. The coming together of the three is contact; in dependence on contact, sensation; in dependence on sensation, thirst; in dependence on thirst, grasping; in dependence on grasping, coming-to-be; in dependence on coming-to-be, birth; in dependence on birth comes about the arising of old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair. This is the arising of the world.

“ And what is the passing away of the world ? In dependence on eye and forms springs up eye-consciousness—in dependence on ear and sounds springs up ear-consciousness—in dependence on nose and smells springs up nose-consciousness—in dependence on tongue and flavours springs up tongue-consciousness—in dependence on body and contacts springs up body-consciousness—in dependence on thinking and things springs up thought-consciousness. The coming together of the three is contact ; in dependence on contact, sensation ; in dependence on sensation, thirst ; and just through the utter and complete ceasing of this thirst comes the ceasing of seizing ; through the ceasing of seizing, the ceasing of coming-to-be ; through the ceasing of coming-to-be, the ceasing of birth ; through the ceasing of birth, cease old age and dying, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair. Such is the ceasing of this entire mass of suffering. This is the passing away of the world.”

According to the Buddhist insight there is carried out in consciousness the arising of the world, which in living itself out also at the same time conceptually lives out itself *as* such.

In the foregoing the four first Khandhas were called the home, the points of support, of consciousness. Here the six sense-powers are called the supporting-points of consciousness. How do these two ways of naming permit of being reconciled ?

. I reply : The six sense-powers are nothing but the first four Khandhas viewed from another standpoint, whereby the five sense-powers (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body as power of feeling) belong to the first

Khandha, *Form*, and the sixth sense, thinking (*mano*) to the three remaining Khandhas, Sensation, Perception, and the Sankharas, from which consciousness breaks forth as the flame from friction. Consciousness and its supporting-points are not opposites, but transitions, one the form of development of the other, in which the Sankharas represent that transition-moment in which thinking as Vedanā and Saññā, in the glow of friction, is on the point of breaking out into Viññāna. Both, the six sense-powers as well as the Four Khandhas, are here the home, the supporting-point for consciousness, its antecedent conditions ; and to the question, " Whence arises consciousness ? " it is just as often answered, " Out of the six sense-powers ", as " Out of the First Four Khandhas ", which latter, summarised, are called mind-form (*nāma-rūpaṃ*).

What now is the distinction between consciousness and its supporting-points, whether these are called the six sense-powers, or whether they are called the first four Grasping-groups ?

That there is a difference between them is made abundantly evident from the oft-repeated expression *saviññānako-kāyo*, i.e. this body together with consciousness. That consciousness and its supporting-points, on the other hand, are not opposites is evident from the fact that consciousness, as shown in the passage quoted above, from the Samyutta Nikāya, cannot be present without the four others.

The relationship between the two, between consciousness and its supporting-points, is this, that they are all forms of grasping ; and that hereby consciousness represents that special case in which nutrition lives out itself *as* such. The entire *I*, the

entire personality, is nutrition ; and consciousness is this *I*, in so far as it lives itself out as nutrition. Whereby then, everything depends upon whether consciousness comprehends this *itself* in the fictive sense of an identification of the *I* with itself (characteristic of Faith), and in the hypothetical sense of a mere process of adaptation to Actuality (characteristic of Science), or whether it lives out this itself as that which it is in truth and Actuality—a process of Grasping, that special instance of Grasping in which Grasping embraces itself, in short, *nutrition as living experience*.

Yet once more : The entire personality, the entire *I*, is Grasping, and therewith nutrition ; and consciousness is nutrition as living experience ; *i.e.* it is neither the immediate being in itself, an *I*-self (*attā*) identical with itself, nor the mediate succession of a process of cause and effect, but the mediate - immediate, the successive - simultaneous (*paticca-sam*) of a process of growth, in which one moment is neither the same as the next nor yet another, but in which every moment *becomes* another, passes into that other, just as one moment of a flame is neither the same as the next nor yet another, but *becomes* the next. This is the crucial point in every doctrine of Actuality, and of the whole of Buddhism—this insight into consciousness as a process of Grasping that embraces itself in its grasping ; an insight that does not take place mediately, by mere knowing, and nevertheless is not immediate, independent, but is an insight which itself is the same as the subject which it teaches—a process of nutrition.

Here is the point where proof is impossible,

and faith is not necessary. Here is the point where only *one* thing helps—*teaching* and *deep reflection*, a patient letting thought lie still until light breaks, and one recognises : *Yes, it is so !*

When from this new insight I return to the problem nutrition, I say : Nutrition is Grasping, *i.e.* it is neither a metaphysical power nor yet a purely physical process of approach, but it is *that as which it conceives itself*, an “*itself*” that excludes an “*I-self*”, just that which the Buddha calls an a-metaphysical (*an-attā*). It is the unique, in which the thing, the Actuality itself, coincides with the knowledge of it, the concept. To grasp, and to grasp oneself *as such*—that is the same thing. It is all Grasping, distinguished from the other forms of grasping only in this, that here the gap between concept and object is absent, *i.e.* the unity between concept and object is present, not as identity, but as that in which the one ever and again becomes the other.

Just as one does not need to strike a light in order to find out if light is present, so one needs no standpoint outside of consciousness in order to grasp consciousness as that which it is. It is as with the choirmaster of a five-membered choir who himself, as the chief, takes up his part, and in the performance of the whole piece takes in himself along with it. In the same way, consciousness, in the play of the five Khandhas, takes in itself along with them, without the need of a standpoint outside of them. How is that possible? It is here a question of no mere possibility which must first await its confirmation from the power of conceiving, but of the power of Grasping, of

experiencing, itself. *It is even so, and must be lived out.*

Let none think ill of me that I have devoted so much trouble and repetition to this point. When I recollect how much trouble, how many years of patient reflection, it has cost me in order to recognise all this, I cannot imagine that the understanding of these things should really fall out more easily to others. And yet everything depends upon this understanding. If this is wanting, then Buddhism remains a mere *object* of conceiving. And then, of course, everything in it is easy, the Anatta doctrine as the Nibbana doctrine; just as it is easy to reach a point if, instead of going thither by painful travel, one is satisfied to point to it with the finger. And he alone who has understood what has been said up to this point will be able to grasp what I am now going to say about the hitherto untranslated word *Sankhara*.

This word is, so to speak, the axis, the turning-point at which takes place the change from mental life in the ordinary sense to Buddhism and its doctrine of Actuality. In the Sankharas is carried out that transformation in which the word "concept" ceases to be a mere conceptual standpoint with regard to Actuality, *and becomes Actuality itself*. There takes place the change from Actuality as mere conceptual knowing to Actuality as living life.

*Sankhara* is everything—things outside, objects, as it is *I*, the subject, and that which unites both. The knowledge thereof that it is so, is equally a process of Grasping which sets in with the concept-formations (*sankhārā*) as forms, sounds, smells,



tastes, touches, and develops into the concepts in the narrower sense.

The word Sankhara means Grasping, precisely Grasping in that actual sense in which it swallows up in itself what in the ordinary sense is "object", and what in the ordinary sense is "subject", and what in the ordinary sense is "concept", as medium between these two, and leaves to all three only a conventional existence, somewhat like a sort of atavism of thought, a survival from time of prejudiced envisagement of Actuality. To put it in one word : The term Sankhara is intended to embrace Actuality in all its three aspects, namely, subject, object, and the intermediate link between the two, the concept. These are actualities in the sense of activities and actualisations, the latter word being taken in the subjective, as well as in the objective, sense.

"And what, ye monks, are called Actualities (*sankhārā*) ? The objective actualities they upbuild (*sankhataṃ abhisankharonti*) ; therefore are they called actualities. And what objective actualities do they upbuild ? Forms do they upbuild to an actuality, in accordance with their form-ness (*rūpat-tāya*). Sensation do they upbuild to an actuality in accordance with its sensation-ness (*vedanattāya*). Perception do they upbuild to an actuality in accordance with its perception-ness (*saññattāya*). Conceptive actualities (*sankhārā*) do they upbuild to an actuality in accordance with their conceptiveness (*sankhārattāya*). Consciousness do they upbuild to an actuality in accordance with its consciousness-ness (*viññāṇattāya*). The objective actualities do they upbuild, therefore are they called actualities "

(Khandha Samyutta 79, Samyutta Nikāya III., p. 87).

When a man passes from the sleeping to the waking state he thereby carries out neither an immediate, free process of cognition nor a mediate process of cognition induced by concepts. A waking state which must first assure itself conceptually of its waking state is no waking state, and can never become one, because all conceptual attempts at assurance might also be dream. A man who passes from the sleeping to the waking state carries out nothing whatever ; but *there is carried out* in him a process of waking. And in the same way, a man who enters into this new insight carries out neither an immediate nor a mediate process of cognition, but *there goes on in him* a process of growth in which the way that conducts thither is itself the transition.

“ These four kinds of nutriment (*ahāro*) there are, for the maintenance of become beings, for the upbringing of becoming beings. Which four ? Material nutriment, coarse or fine ; second, sense-contact ; third, mental assimilation ; fourth, consciousness ” (Samyutta Nikāya II., p. 13 and elsewhere).

The word *Ahāro* (nutriment) is, as for example is shown in the Discourse upon *Right Insight* (Majjhima Nikāya 9), synonymous with *Upādānam* (grasping) and the whole doctrine of nutrition is nothing but another expression for the *I* as a process of grasping.

- This formula is without further words comprehensible as far as it concerns the first form, material nutriment, coarse or fine, eating, drinking, breathing. In order, however, to understand it in its

further three clauses, there is needed the living experience. How sense-contact can grow into being nutriment, one cannot comprehend ; this, one must live out, and then one will know it. Out of the perceptions given with sense-contact, a growth, an increase, a nourishing can develop. " Man does not live by bread alone ", but by the words and tokens that Actuality gives him. The artistically inclined man is what I should call the man who above all is set upon contact-nutriment. While I should call the scientist and the philosopher men who are mainly set upon conceptual nutriment, the mental assimilation that is carried on in the formation of concepts, in conceptual thinking. On the other hand, consciousness-nutriment is everything in which life enriches itself, and gives value to itself.

This judgment as to the value of life requires no standpoint from which it is carried on, but it is carried on as consciousness itself. The fictive procedure of Faith, the hypothetical procedure of Science—all this is consciousness-nutriment. It is here, in the key-word, nutriment, that Faith and Science at their roots coincide in that unity which is neither inaccessible to the concept (as an object of Faith), nor yet accessible to it (as an object of proof), but is the concept itself as this making actual which is nutriment, and has its sufficient cause neither in a metaphysical *I*-ness, nor in a physical " other-ness ", nor yet in itself (for an " itself " is here present only in the form of self-exclusion), but in its antecedent conditions.

## ELEVENTH CHAPTER

### MIND-FORM AND CONSCIOUSNESS

WITH this I again broach the question : What are the antecedent conditions of consciousness ?

Here, as everywhere, we have the possibility of the fictive, as of the hypothetical, interpretation. Faith says : " The antecedent condition of consciousness is a power of cognition in itself which is of a metaphysical nature and, as such, is either lent me by God, as Faith-religion teaches, or exists autonomously as ' thinking in itself ', as is held by scientific faith ".

Science, as exact science, says : " Consciousness has its antecedent conditions in the experiences of the senses, out of which it is yielded as a pure *a posteriori*, whereas for Faith it is a power of cognition in itself, an *a priori* to all experience ". Science, in a well-known saying, expresses itself thus : "*Nil est in intellectu quod non antea fuerit in sensibus* (there is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses)". While Faith, were it to make use of a corresponding dictum, would have to say : "*Nil est in sensibus quod non antea fuerit in intellectu* (there is nothing in the senses which was not first in the intellect)". The modern teaching of Actuality apparently is distinguished

from this mode of comprehending things in saying :  
 “ Consciousness is antecedent condition to itself, at one time as the *over-consciousness*, ‘mentation’, at another time as the *instinctive life of the sub-consciousness*; in the former case consciousness as ‘mentation’ being an *a priori* to all experience, i.e. a matter of faith; and in the latter case, being that which through the psycho-analytical procedure ought to come entirely within the domain of the phenomenal, an *a posteriori* to all experience”.

“Overcoming these two extremes, the Accomplished One points out in the middle the Doctrine.” The Buddha points out and teaches that consciousness has its antecedent condition neither in the metaphysical—whether one calls this metaphysical, God, or thinking in itself, or mentation—nor in the physical, whether called substance, or sense-organ, or anything else; but in forms of Grasping, and this is mind-form (*nāma-rūpaṃ*).

What is this mind-form?

The Texts give the following definition : “Sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), tendentious thinking (*cetanā*), sense-contact (*phassa*), attention (*manasikāro*)—this is called mind (*nāman*=that which bends, that which is dominant); the Four Chief Elements, and the Form that exists in dependence upon the Four Chief Elements—this is called Form (*rūpaṃ*). Thus, this is Mind; and this, Form” (Nidāna Samyutta 2, and elsewhere).

In how far is Mind-form the antecedent condition of consciousness? To this question the preliminary answer runs: *In so far as consciousness is the antecedent condition of Mind-form.*

“If what is present, is mind-form present?

In dependence on what is mind-form present? If consciousness is present, mind-form is present; in dependence on consciousness is mind-form present. If what is present, is consciousness present? In dependence on what is consciousness present? "If mind-form is present, consciousness is present; in dependence on mind-form is consciousness present" (Dīgha Nikāya 14, and elsewhere).

How are we to understand that?

Consciousness springs up in the friction of the living contact of the senses with things, as eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and thought-consciousness. As such it resembles what the physicist calls living force, vital energy. Where dwells this living force? It is deposited, formed, corporealised, *enfleshed*, in mind-form, in Nāma-rūpa. "This corporeality, ye monks, does not belong to you, does not belong to others; as formed action (*purāṇam kammaṃ*), as a something actualised (*abhisankhataṃ*), as a something upbuilt by thinking (*abhisañcetaṃ*) is this to be regarded" (Nidāna Samyutta 37; Samyutta Nikāya II., p. 65).

Mind-form and consciousness, speaking physically, stand in the relation of latent and active force. Mind-form is the antecedent condition of consciousness because it is formed action, *enfleshed* consciousness, and thereby, a single, unique, individual state of tension on the basis of which the very next discharge of living force, the next new upspringing of consciousness, will assume a new individual value. The consciousness that just now springs up out of its antecedent condition, the mind-form, is no

longer the consciousness that sprang up in the moment just past; for with every moment there enters a corresponding change of tension in the mind-form which conditions a corresponding change in the next consciousness-moment. Ever and again there is the same interplay between mind-form and consciousness, and ever and again a new interplay with changed values, let these changes be ever so infinitely minute; but the changes are always there, numberless as number itself.

“ Old and new action, ye monks, will I show to you. And what, ye monks, is old action (*purāṇam kammam*)? The eye is old action; the ear is old action; the nose is old action; the tongue is old action; the body is old action; thinking is old action. As a something actualised, as a something upbuilt in thinking, is this to be regarded.

“ This, ye monks, is what is called old action.

“ And what, ye monks, is new action (*navakammam*)? What just now is action acts, in body, in speech, and in thought,—this is called new action ” (Samyutta Nikāya IV., p. 132).

The consciousness which just now says “ I ” is no longer the same as that which said “ I ” the previous moment, for it is increased by the moment of a saying of “ I ”, just as the flame at this moment is no longer the same as it was at the previous moment, and as it will be in the next following moment, notwithstanding its apparent sameness. Between mind-form and consciousness prevails the same ceaseless, quivering, leaping play, as between the ever-repeated new moments of combustion of a flame and its external shape. Here consciousness corresponds to the ever-repeated new moments of

combustion, while mind-form corresponds to the ever new shape of the flame.

This is the inner movement which is not the form of expression of an "I", be it in the subjective, be it in the objective, sense, but which is the thing itself: *nutrition as living experience*. Therefore is it said in the *Anguttara Nikāya*, Book of Threes, I., p. 223: "Action (*kammaṃ*: here another expression for mind-form) is the seed-field, consciousness the seed (*kammaṃ khettaṃ, viññāṇaṃ bījaṃ*)". Just as the seed enters into the seed-field, and again comes forth from it, so does consciousness enter into mind-form, and again come forth out of it.

Here this springing up of the new moment of consciousness is itself destiny—every moment a veritable *movi-mentum*, a mental motion, which brings in its train a corresponding result. What is this body here, with its six-sense-ness? Formed consciousness is what it is. What is the eye? Formed consciousness! The ear? Formed consciousness! The nose? Formed consciousness! The tongue? Formed consciousness! The body? Formed consciousness! The thinking? Formed consciousness!

And further: What is the eye? The prefiguration of new consciousness! What is the ear? The prefiguration of new consciousness! What the nose? The prefiguration of new consciousness! What the tongue? The prefiguration of new consciousness! What the body? The prefiguration of new consciousness. What the thinking? The prefiguration of new consciousness! How could the finger grasp, the eye see, thought perceive and consider, if they were not formed consciousness?



How could the stomach carry on its wonderful selective operations which put to derision all chemical and physical calculation—how could this whole play of the Sankharas run its course, if they were not themselves this ever-repeated new Grasping, springing up out of its own antecedent conditions?

“The Word became flesh”, but not as an incomprehensible miracle transcending all human understanding, which took place but once, but as this uninterrupted, continuous embodying of consciousness in mind-form. The twin problems, force and matter, each of which by itself is to mere knowledge insoluble, here are lived out as unity. *The concept, as this process of self-enfleshing, is the unity of force and matter.*

Throughout the whole of mental life runs the opposition of body and soul, of corporeality and mentality, of force and matter. This is the erroneous idea that spoils all, namely, the right comprehension of Actuality. There are no opposites, mind and body, force and matter. There is only Grasping in its different phases; on one hand, as the living force of the ever-repeated new becoming of consciousness, resembling the spark of flame; on the other hand, as the potential force, mind-form, resembling the flame shape.

The body here is not simply matter inhabited by mind, but it is itself a mind-form; and in this exchange between consciousness and mind-form, between mind and its manifestation, there runs its course what we commonly call life—life, with its dying and being born, its sufferings and joys, its exultations and its despairs, its regrets and its

satisfactions, its shame and its pride; in short, life as destiny !

“ In so far, Ananda, there is being born, there is growing old, there is dying, there is disappearing and reappearing, in so far there is yielded the possibility of naming, the possibility of explaining, the possibility of cognition. In so far there is yielded the entire domain of knowledge, in so far life lives itself out (*vattam vattati*=the process proceeds) for cognition, as this state here (*itthattam*), namely, as mind-form together with consciousness ” (Mahānidāna Suttanta, Dīgha Nikāya II., pp. 63, 64).

The relationship between mind-form and consciousness is neither that of likeness, of timeless co-existence, nor that of difference, of temporal succession, but the relation of succession-simultaneousness (*paticca-sam*), whereby the one ever and again becomes the outcome of growth of the other.

“ If, ye monks, the view exists : ‘ The same as is the life, the same is the body (*taṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ*) ’, then there is no place for the life of purity. And if, ye monks, the view exists : ‘ One thing is the life, and another is the body ’, then also there is no place for the life of purity. Overcoming these two ends, the Accomplished One points out in the middle the Doctrine ” (Nidāna Samyutta 36 ; Samyutta Nikāya II., p. 63).

There is a place for the life of purity only when life ever and again corporealises itself into body ; and body ever and again vitalises itself into life ; and the whole is a single process of growth in which one moment is neither the same as the next nor yet

another, but ever and again *becomes* the next, just as in a flame one moment is neither the same as the next nor yet another, but ever and again becomes the next.

\* What the Buddha teaches in the schema of the five Grasping-groups and their non-selfness, here becomes living experience. In the play of mind-form and consciousness is lived out non-selfness. In this play, life lives itself out wholly and entirely as a process of nutrition without an eater, which has no more room for an *I*-self, be it in the subjective-metaphysical sense of Faith, be it in the objective-physical sense of Science. Here there is nothing but Grasping in its different phases, in which one phase ever and again brings about, and presupposes, the other. Always the same play, and yet, at every moment, another! A play with regard to which only the *one* question remains: *How much longer?*

## TWELFTH CHAPTER

### DEPENDENT-SIMULTANEOUS ARISING

WITH the insight into the mutual dependence between mind-form and consciousness, with the insight that consciousness has its sufficient reason in mind-form, and this its sufficient reason in consciousness, two questions simultaneously arise. First: Where lies the sufficient reason for this play of mind-form and consciousness? And second: If this play excludes an *I*-self, where then lies the sufficient reason for this idea, for the *I*-concept?

On this point nothing permits of being said by conceptual thinking, since that would mean a passing beyond itself in the objective, as in the conceptual, sense, the former being an impossibility, and the latter an unthinkability. I, the actual thinker, here am dependent upon instruction, not in the sense of an instruction in Faith which has to be accepted as dogma; not in the sense of scientific instruction which can only be proven through something else; but in the sense of an actual instruction which, itself living experience, must also be lived out, and in this living out finds itself proven; which thus requires nothing but the measure of confidence necessary until this living out can be carried through.

The instruction which the Buddha gives answers both questions, that as to the sufficient reason of the play of Grasping, as also that as to the sufficient reason of the *I*-idea, in one; by this answer, namely: *The sufficient reason of both is Ignorance.*

The formula for Ignorance as the sufficient reason of life is given by the Buddha in the series of Dependent - Simultaneous Arising (*paticca-samuppāda*), and runs as follows:

In dependence upon Ignorance (*avijjā*), the Tendencies (*sankhārā*); in dependence upon the Tendencies, Consciousness (*viññāṇam*); in dependence upon Consciousness, Mind-form (*nāma-rūpam*); in dependence upon Mind-form, the Six Sense-domains (*salāyatanaṃ*); in dependence upon the Six Sense-domains, Contact (*phasso*); in dependence upon Contact, Sensation (*vedanā*); in dependence upon Sensation, Thirst (*taṇhā*); in dependence upon Thirst, Grasping (*upādānam*); in dependence upon Grasping, Coming-to-be (*bhavo*); in dependence upon Coming-to-be, Birth (*jāti*); in dependence upon Birth, old age and dying, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair, come to arising. Thus is the arising of this entire mass of Suffering. (*Nidāna Samyutta* 1, and elsewhere.)

In the Texts these concepts are defined in the following manner:

“What, ye monks, is Birth? What there is of birth, of being born, parturition, re-birth of this or that being, the coming into appearance of the Groups (*khandhā*), the grasping of the points of support — this is called Birth. And what is Coming-to-be? These three kinds of Coming-to-

be there are : Sensuous Coming-to-be (*kāma-bhavo*), Coming-to-be, associated with Form (*rūpa-bhavo*), and Coming - to - be, unassociated with Form (*arūpa-bhavo*). And what is Grasping (*upādānaṃ*)? These four kinds of Grasping there are : Grasping as sensuality, Grasping as views, Grasping as custom and habit, and Grasping as self-belief. And what is Thirst? These six kinds of Thirst there are : the thirst after forms, the thirst after sounds, after smells, after tastes, after contacts, after things. And what is Sensation? These six kinds of Sensation there are : the sensation arisen out of eye-contact, the sensation arisen out of contact of ear, nose, tongue, body, and thought. And what is Contact? These six kinds of Contact there are : eye-contact, contact of ear, nose, tongue, body, and thought. And what are the Six Senses? The sense of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and thought. And what is Mind-form? Sensation, perception, intention, contact, reflection—that is mind. The Four Chief Elements, and what in dependence upon them is present as Form—that is Form. And what is Consciousness? These six kinds of Consciousness there are : eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, and thought-consciousness. And what are the Tendencies? These three Tendencies there are : body-tendencies, speech-tendencies, thought-tendencies. And what is Ignorance? Ignorance is ignorance of Suffering, ignorance of the Arising of Suffering, ignorance of the Annihilation of Suffering, and ignorance of the Way that leads to the Annihilation of Suffering."

And now, how can life as a whole, in its mental,

as in its corporeal, forms, arise out of Ignorance as sufficient reason ?

The philologists have made of this series what they have been able to make of it. This is not the place for me to enter in detail into their unfortunate and mistaken efforts. I give the characteristic feature of all of them when I say : They start out with the view that the concept is the standpoint from which one will become master of one's object as a conceived thing. That may pass so long as it is a question of an object of mere knowing ; but it becomes an attempt that leads to the *ad absurdum* so soon as it is a question of the grasping of the concept itself. And so the philologists, in their endeavours with their logic to lead the Buddha into the *ad absurdum*, display nothing but their own lack of understanding.

In order to understand that Ignorance can be a sufficient reason for life, one must know that life is not what it is commonly thought to be—a spiritual entity, a subject in itself, or a corporeal entity, an object in itself, but it is Grasping, *i.e.* it is a mental value ; but a mental value of such a kind that in order to be present it must ever and again spring up out of its own antecedent conditions.

The antecedent condition for the understanding of the dependent-simultaneous arising series, is the understanding of life as *Grasping*, taking the word in its actual, living sense. Only when this understanding has arisen, can one understand the unbroken series within the twelve links, and the apparent lack of logic, nay, the apparent contradictions within the series. For logic, it is an insoluble contradiction when first of all consciousness

and its partners come forth, and then, birth. For him who has understood life as a process of Grasping, all these are no contradictions in themselves, but phases of growth, proceeding from which, life as a process of Grasping, ever and again starts afresh—in *ignorance about itself*; and leading to which, Grasping ever and again ends—in *Suffering*.

The series of Dependent-Simultaneous Arising is most frequently translated as "Causal Series". That may be right, or it may be wrong. It is wrong if by causality is understood what science understands by it, the succession of cause and effect.

The Paticcasamuppāda is, of course, Causality, but not the scientific causality of the pure succession of cause and effect, in which alone issues scientific causality; but it is causality in accord with Actuality as the succession-simultaneousness of growth. The sprout is not the pure succession of the seed, the leaf is not the pure succession of the sprout, and so on; but each phase here is the simultaneousness-succession of the other. The seed is not other than the sprout; it is also not the same; but it *becomes* the sprout; the latter is its simultaneousness-succession.

Accordingly it is said in the Nidāna Samyutta 69 (Samyutta Nikāya II., pp. 118, 119):

"If, ye monks, the ocean upheaves, it makes the great rivers upheave. If the great rivers upheave, they make the streams upheave. If the streams upheave, they make the lakes upheave. If the lakes upheave, they make the fish-ponds upheave. Even so also, ye monks, if Ignorance upheaves, it make the Tendencies upheave. If the Tendencies upheave, they make Consciousness upheave. If



Consciousness upheaves, it makes Mind-form upheave. If Mind-form upheaves, it makes the Six Senses upheave. If the Six Senses upheave, they make Contact upheave. If Contact upheaves, it makes Sensation upheave. If Sensation upheaves, it makes Thirst upheave. If Thirst upheaves, it makes Grasping upheave. If Grasping upheaves, it makes Coming-to-be upheave. If Coming-to-be upheaves, it makes Birth upheave. If Birth upheaves, it makes old age and death upheave."

"If, ye monks, the ocean subsides, it makes the great rivers subside. If the great rivers subside, they make the streams subside. If the streams subside, they make the lakes subside. If the lakes subside, they make the fish-ponds subside. Even so also, ye monks, if Ignorance subsides, it makes the Tendencies subside. If the Tendencies subside, they make Consciousness subside. If Consciousness subsides, it makes Mind-form subside. If Mind-form subsides, it makes the Six Senses subside. If the Six Senses subside, it makes Contact subside. If Contact subsides, it makes Sensation subside. If Sensation subsides, it makes Thirst subside. If Thirst subsides, it makes Grasping subside. If Grasping subsides, it makes Coming-to-be subside. If Coming-to-be subsides, it makes Birth subside. If Birth subsides, it makes old age and death subside."

## THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

### IGNORANCE

UNDERSTOOD in purely conceptual fashion, there are three possible ways of envisaging the relation of life to its sufficient reason. First : We may say that life, as something essentially metaphysical, has an Absolute called God, soul, or what not, as its sufficient reason. This is the view of Faith. Secondly : We may look upon life as something essentially physical, a merely physical phenomenon which has another life-phenomenon, for example, physical parents, as its sufficient reason. This is the view of Science. And thirdly : We may adopt the view that life is sufficient reason to itself—a view which makes possible both the above-given interpretations, that of Faith, as that of Science. If life is sufficient reason to itself, then it is referred to another kind of life that in truth would be a metaphysical value, the which, however, in the process of development, is forced to surrender its metaphysical character.

The surprising resemblance between this reflexive mode of understanding things and Buddhism arises from the fact that here life is referred to life itself, just as the Buddha also refers life to life itself. The only difference is, that this " itself "

here becomes a value in itself, whereby, as shown above, one ends in a contradiction with oneself.

On the other hand, when the Buddha refers life to itself, this "self" is a something that excludes a "Me" and "Mine", and is just *ignorance about oneself*.

I should like here to cite by way of comparison what in optics is called the phenomenon of interference. Light-interference, as beam of light turned back upon itself, may be called light as a thing referred back to itself, thus, a reflexive process. But as in the interference of light, this reference to itself excludes an "itself", inasmuch as the beam of light, precisely through its power to become a something that turns against itself, excludes an entity in itself, a central core, and proves itself to be a pure process, so does life, precisely through its power of referring itself back to itself, prove itself to be a pure process devoid of any central core, to be nutrition without an eater.

*Ignorance is the sufficient reason of life*, and, as the Buddha teaches, is beginningless.

"Without cognisable beginning (*anamatagga*), ye monks, is this Samsara. A first beginning of beings caught in ignorance, fettered by thirst, running hence, wandering hence, is not to be made known (*na paññāyati*)" (Samyutta Nikāya II., p. 178 and elsewhere).

Here also one must make a clear distinction between Faith, Science, and Buddhism. Faith teaches the *absolute* beginninglessness of life as God, as eternal being; Science teaches *relative* beginninglessness, in the reference of one phenomenon of life to another; Buddhism teaches

a beginninglessness that is reflexive, that is, a beginninglessness which refers solely to the grasping process itself.

Understood in purely conceptual fashion, the dictum, "A first beginning is not cognisable", is an agnosticism; and can be interpreted as well in the sense of Faith as in the sense of Science. But Buddhism would be abjuring its own title to exist if on this all-decisive point it failed to declare itself. It would resemble a plant which strikes no root in great mother earth, and so is liable to withering and decay.

Were the dictum, "A first beginning is not cognisable", mere agnosticism, the accusation that Buddhism gives only a limited segment of the universal whole would be justified. But this accusation falls to the ground when it is proven that the single plant, the individual, is set in the firm soil of earth, springs up out of that firm soil. In other words: Life as living experience, as this grasping process, remains a mere limited segment of the world-mass, remains a living out at one's own expense and risk, so to speak, when it is not traced into that depth wherein mere knowledge and living experience, world and I, fall together. And this depth in which world and I, mere knowledge and living experience, fall together, is *Ignorance*.

In Ignorance is rooted everything—the *I* as well as the world, living experience as well as mere knowledge. And the beginninglessness which the Buddha teaches is not an agnosticism which can be interpreted either in the sense of Faith or in that of Science, but is the root which the *I* sinks in the mother-soil of the world. Both are beginningless,

not as that which has absolutely *no* beginning, but as that which *has* no beginning because it *is* itself the beginning.

Beginning itself, however, is the Grasping, the seizing, which *as* such is conceptually present in the paralogical form of the absence of all conceiving, of all true knowledge, precisely as *ignorance*,—a conceptual interference which can never become accessible to conceiving, not because it is inconceivable in itself, but because it is conceiving itself, and as such, goes along with all attempts at conceiving.

Just as light-interference is not something which darkens light, but is light itself, a special instance of light, so ignorance is not something that darkens conceiving, but is conceiving itself, and as such that which goes along with all conceiving, as I go along with all my attempts to go. And the difference between light-interference and conceptual interference is only this, that light-interference as a physical process is not reversible, and can be interpreted equally as well in the sense of not-yet-light as in the sense of no-more-light, while conceptual interference, ignorance, unreversible both as regards mere knowledge and as regards living experience, points to beginninglessness, namely, to this beginningless not-yet-light to which the Buddhas from beginninglessness down to the present moment have found the solution, have uttered that delivering word, which along with beginninglessness gives the possibility of ceasing, and which causes to emerge out of that swamp of Samsara wherein mere knowing and living experience are mixed up in disgusting fashion the pure living experience of ceasing, of extinguishing.

Whether there are Tathagatas, or whether there are none, the nature of all Actuality remains this *transient - painful - non - self*. That means: The nature of all Actuality is Grasping, seizing. But if there were not this *transient - painful - non - self*, then there were no need for Tathagatas. These produce out of this beginninglessness of Grasping, of seizing, out of the triple chord, Transient, Painful, Non-self, that pure living experience to which the *transient* no longer applies, since with the ceasing of being born ceases also dying;—to which the *painful* no longer applies, because here suffering comprehends along with itself the ceasing of suffering. It is that pure living experience which is nothing but the living experience of *non-self*, of Anatta, which means the possibility of ceasing for ever.

“Whether Tathagatas arise in the world or whether Tathagatas do not arise, it is yet the established rule, the natural law, the natural order, that all Sankharas are transient, that all Sankharas are painful, that all Dhammas are non-self” (Angutara Nikāya III., p. 134).

Buddhism is not simply living experience, a taking leave of the world because it happens to please me; it is the *living experience of Actuality*. What is here lived out does not run counter to what experience offers; but also it does not arise out of experience; it springs from that common root in which these two coincide, *Ignorance*.

Ignorance, as the Texts teach, is ignorance of Suffering, of the Arising of Suffering, of the Ending of Suffering, and of the Way that leads to the Ending of Suffering. That means: Ignorance is

ignorance of the Doctrine as it is set forth in the Four Noble Truths.

“And what, ye monks, is the Noble Truth of Suffering? Birth is Suffering, old age is Suffering, death is Suffering, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are Suffering. Not to get what one wants is Suffering; in short, the Five Grasping-groups are Suffering.

“And what, ye monks, is the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering? What there is of this thirst, associated with re-birth, bound up with lust, here and there taking delight, namely, the thirst for sensuality, the thirst after Coming-to-be (*bhavatanhā*), the thirst after no (more) Coming-to-be (*vibhavatanhā*).

“And what, ye monks, is the Noble Truth of the Ending of Suffering? Just total and entire ending, giving up, renunciation, deliverance, dispassion, as regards this thirst.

“And what, ye monks, is the Noble Truth of the Way that leads to the Ending of Suffering? Just the Noble Eight-membered Path, namely: Right Insight, Right Resolve, Right Speech, Right Doing, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Recollection, Right Mental Concentration.”

The Five Grasping-groups are Suffering; and ignorance of this—that alone is Ignorance.

“Ignorance, ignorance, it is said, Lord. But what, Lord, is ignorance? And in how far is one fettered in ignorance?”

“There, O monk, the uninstructed worldling does not, in accordance with truth, cognise the form that is subject to arising, as subject to arising; does not, in accordance with truth, cognise sensa-

tion, perception, the tendings, consciousness, that are subject to arising, as subject to arising. He does not, in accordance with truth, cognise form, sensation, perception, the tendings, and consciousness, that are subject to passing away, as subject to passing away. . He does not, in accordance with truth, cognise form, sensation, perception, the tendings, and consciousness, that are subject to arising-passing-away, as subject to arising-passing-away" (Khandha Samyutta 126).

And further: "The uninstructed worldling, ye monks, looks upon the form as self, looks upon sensation (perception, the tendings, consciousness) as self. Such an one, ye monks, is called an uninstructed worldling, fettered with the fetter of form (sensation, perception, the tendings, consciousness), fettered with inward and outward fetters, not seeing this shore, not seeing the other shore. Fettered is he born, fettered does he die, fettered does he pass from this world to the other world" (Samyutta Nikāya II., 3).

Ignorance is the concept for which from beginninglessness down to the present moment, the Buddhas have found the object, *i.e.* the Doctrine, the Dhamma; but it is concept in the paralogical form of the absence of all conceiving, namely, as pure and simple Grasping, for which the object cannot be found through conceptual thinking, but only upon the path which the Buddhas travel, that unique path (*ekāyano maggo*) in which knowledge and conduct, reflection and renunciation, are intertwined—the Eightfold Path.

Just as the object of Ignorance is no "object" in the ordinary sense, but Suffering, so the concept



corresponding to this object, Ignorance, is no "concept" in the ordinary sense, but like everything else, also a process of growth and nutrition, a phase within this process of growth and nutrition called the *I*; only, it is that decisive phase which must be present in order that this process of nourishment behind which stands no eater as driving force, as *Primum movens*, may be able further to run its course.

"What must be present in order that the *Sankharas* (the play of life as a whole) may be present? Ignorance must be present." (Nidāna Samyutta 2.) For its continued existence life needs nothing else but ignorance about itself. In order to keep itself going it needs nothing but this, that it should not be disconcerted at itself, should not become an object of disgust to itself. Here Buddhism works—as the physicist would say—according to the Law of Parsimony. In order to explain life, it does not need to set in motion the metaphysical apparatus of religion, or the physical apparatus of science; it needs nothing but ignorance about itself, which is neither a metaphysical value nor yet a physical one, but Grasping itself, unmitigated by any actual understanding, and thereby the ever-repeated new beginning and starting of all life,—the sufficient reason, out of which as out of an inexhaustible source, life ever and again springs up afresh.

"A first beginning of Ignorance, ye monks, of such sort that one could say, 'Before this point ignorance was not present, but after this point it has arisen', is not discernible (*na paññāyati*). And yet an, 'On the basis of this is ignorance present',

is discernible. Ignorance, ye monks, I call nutritive (*sāhāram*=by its nature a process of nutrition), not un-nutritive (*anāhāram*). And what, ye monks, is the nutriment of ignorance? The Five Hindrances are so to be called. The Five Hindrances also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of the Five Hindrances? The three evil modes of life are so to be called. These also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of the three evil modes of life? Not keeping watch over the senses is so to be called. This also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of not keeping watch over the senses? Heedlessness and inattention are thus to be called. These also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of heedlessness and inattention? Shallow thinking is thus to be called. This also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of shallow thinking? Imperfect confidence is thus to be called. This also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of imperfect confidence? The not hearing the right doctrine is so to be called. This also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of not hearing the right doctrine? Not consorting with the good is so to be called.

“ If, ye monks, is accomplished not consorting with the good, then is accomplished the non-hearing of the right doctrine. And if this is accomplished, then is accomplished imperfect confidence. If this is accomplished, then is accomplished shallow thinking. If this is accomplished, then is accomplished heedlessness and inattention. If these are

accomplished, then is accomplished not watching over the senses. If this is accomplished, then is accomplished the three evil modes of life. If these are accomplished, then are accomplished the Five Hindrances. And if these are accomplished, then is accomplished Ignorance.

“Such is the nutrition of this Ignorance, such its accomplishing.

“Deliverance through Knowledge (*vijjāvimutti*), ye monks, do I call nutritive (*sāhāram*), not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of this Deliverance through Knowledge? The Seven Awakenings are so to be called. The Seven Awakenings (*bojjhaṅgā*) also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of the Seven Awakenings? The Four Bases of Recollectedness (*satipaṭṭhānā*) are so to be called. These also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of the Four Bases of Recollectedness? The three good modes of life are so to be called. These also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of the three good modes of life? Watchfulness over the senses is so to be called. This also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of watchfulness over the senses? Heedfulness and attention is so to be called. These also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of heedfulness and attention? Deep thinking is so to be called. This also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of deep thinking? Confidence is so to be called. This also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of confidence? The

hearing of the right doctrine (*saddhamma*) is so to be called. This also do I call nutritive, not un-nutritive. And what is the nutriment of the right doctrine? Consorting with the good is so to be called.

“If, ye monks, consorting with the good is accomplished, then is accomplished the hearing of the right doctrine. If the hearing of the right doctrine is accomplished, then is accomplished confidence. If confidence is accomplished, then is accomplished deep thinking. If deep thinking is accomplished, then are accomplished heedfulness and attention. If heedfulness and attention are accomplished, then is accomplished watchfulness over the senses. If watchfulness over the senses is accomplished, then are accomplished the three good modes of life. If the three good modes of life are accomplished, then are accomplished the Four Bases of Recollectedness. If the Four Bases of Recollectedness are accomplished, then are accomplished the Seven Awakenings. And if the Seven Awakenings are accomplished, then is accomplished Deliverance through Wisdom.

“Such is the nutriment of this Deliverance through Wisdom, such its fulfilment” (*Anguttara Nikāya V.*, pp. 113, 114).

Thus, all is nutrition. Ignorance also is nutrition; but it is that decisive phase within nutrition in which this latter ever and again starts up anew. And Deliverance through Knowledge is nutrition—is that equally decisive phase of nutrition which springs from what is unique, the impulsion of the Buddha’s doctrine.

It was said above: In consciousness is lived out

destiny, because in it is lived out the transition from ignorance to knowledge.

Just as the bee goes forth from its home for booty and, laden with the nectar of the flowers, returns to its home, so does life, this process of Grasping, go forth outwards for booty and, laden with this booty of perceptions, return back to itself as consciousness. And as the heart feeds the great vessels, the smaller vessels, the capillaries, the tissues of the body, and itself along with them, so does consciousness feed the four other Grasping-groups, and itself along with them. As consciousness, the Grasping process enters into relations with itself, and out of this relation makes a judgment value. As Form, as Sensation, as Perception, as the Tendings, this process of Grasping goes forth into the outer world, enters into relation with it. In the form of consciousness, as a judgment value with reference to these relations, the Grasping process enters into relations with itself, and out of the judgment value extracts the ever-repeated new stimulus to ever-repeated new Grasping, inasmuch as it produces out of this entering into relations with itself, not the living experience of non-selfness, but instead extracts the confirmation and warrant for an *I*-self.

Like a man who, not knowing the mother from whose womb he has sprung, impregnates her, so does consciousness impregnate the maternal womb of its own activity (*kamman khettaṃ viññāṇaṃ bijanī*).

This beginningless play of conceptual inbreeding ceases when consciousness passes out of Ignorance into Knowledge. The ceasing of Becoming is

Nibbana, the ceasing of Becoming is Nibbana (*bhavanirodho nibbānaṃ*).

“ There, Ananda, a monk betakes himself to the foot of a tree, or to an empty chamber, and thus considers: ‘ This is the still, this is the high, namely, this coming to rest of all the Tendings, the renunciation of all cleavings, the drying up of all thirst, cessation, extinguishing.’ This, Ananda, is called Perception of Cessation (*nirodha-saññā*) ” (Anguttara Nikāya V., p. 111).

At this point objection may be raised as follows:

The final result to which thinking leads is the insight: In being freed is the knowledge of being freed (*vimuttasmiṃ vimuttaṃ iti ñānaṃ hoti*). If this final knowledge is not the immediate knowledge of self-mastering thinking, also not a mediate knowledge produced through concepts, but a process of nutrition like everything else, then all effort is vain; and the knowledge of final deliverance is nothing but the final form of self-binding to life in a last, finest form of nutrition; and Buddhism works with the same contradiction in itself as does all other mental life. Here also life would prove itself to be a necessity of life, a value in itself, past which it is simply impossible to get, and which takes revenge on all attempts to pass beyond it by transforming them into the very means whereby it, life, confirms and revivifies itself.

To such objection I reply:

The knowledge of being delivered is not nutrition pure and simple, but, as said, that special instance of nutrition in which the process of nutrition sucks in no more nutrition from outside as a process of actual or conceptual approach, as a process of

Grasping, but in which it has as sole object the ceasing of Grasping, and therewith carries out that last process of nutrition wherein he, the understanding man, resembles the flame that burns without taking up nourishment into itself, and thereby burns towards extinguishing.

That here we have to do with a process of growth exactly like everything else, comes out clearly in the following discourse.

“ The person living in discipline, endowed with discipline, has no need to make conceptually clear to himself, ‘ Blamelessness has arisen in me ! ’ This precisely is the normal course, that in one living in discipline, endowed with discipline, blamelessness arises. The blameless one has no need to make conceptually clear to himself, ‘ Joyfulness has arisen in me ! ’ This precisely is the normal course, that in the blameless one joyfulness arises. The joyous, the happy, the quieted, the stilled, the person who knows in accordance with Actuality, the seeing person, has no need to make conceptually clear to himself, ‘ Disgusted am I, dispassionate am I ! ’ This precisely is the normal course, that the man who knows and sees in accordance with Actuality becomes disgusted, dispassionate. The disgusted, the dispassionate person, has no need to make conceptually clear to himself, ‘ I realise insight into Deliverance through Knowledge ’. This precisely is the normal course, that the disgusted, the dispassionate person, realises insight into Deliverance through Knowledge ” (Anguttara Nikāya V., pp. 2, 3).

Here is no knowledge in the ordinary sense of the word—knowledge which assures itself of itself

as a becoming conscious. Here there are nothing but processes of growth which from their very starting-point bear within themselves the tendency to further growth. If this starting-point happens to be Ignorance, then they bear the tendency towards further growth in the shape of Grasping in itself. If this starting-point happens to be Knowledge, then they bear the tendency towards the ceasing of Grasping in itself. And the transition from Ignorance to Knowledge is not something standing outside this (and as such, a breach of its own law), but it is itself the process of growth. And all this, summed up, is nothing but *concept*—concept swinging from beginningless Grasping to final No-more-grasping, a single life-vibration in its completeness.

Were nutrition always nutrition in the usual sense of the word, that is, a form of maintaining and strengthening life, with the fact that the Arahant takes nourishment the whole system of Buddhism would be blown to atoms. But nutriment is by no means always nutriment in the sense of a strengthening of life. Whether it does actually strengthen life does not depend upon it but upon what stands behind it—upon whether this latter is craving and ignorance, or knowledge and freedom from craving, in which latter case, then, nutrition may well experience itself as a process of the ceasing of all further nourishing.

“It well may be that a man on the day before the full moon, or on full-moon day itself, doubting, may ask himself: ‘Is the moon already full? Is the moon not yet full?’ And it also well may be that a man, doubting, may ask himself: ‘Am I delivered, free from attachment? Am I not



delivered, free from attachment ? ' In such an one, this his doubt is precisely his attachment. He does not regard the Form (Sensation, Perception, the Tendencies, Consciousness) as the self. He also has not the view : ' That is the world. That is the self. Thus shall I be after death, lasting, eternal, permanent, unchangeable '. He also has not the view : ' Not should be, not should be mine. Not shall be, not shall be mine '. But he has doubt, uncertainty, and is not perfect in regard to the Doctrine. What in him is present as doubt, uncertainty, lack of perfection as regards Doctrine, that is a concept (*sankhāro*) " (Khandha Samyutta 81. Samyutta Nikāya III., p. 99).

Were this last attachment removed, then he would know that he was free. Where being freed is not also the knowledge of this being freed, there precisely there is no unattached deliverance, there precisely there remains a bond that binds to the world and leads to new Actuality.

And so, to conclude this chapter :

All mental life can be characterised as the conflict between concept and object ; in which conflict sometimes the concept, sometimes the object, remains the victor. This holds good of every form of mental life, whether Faith or Science or Criticism, whether religion, morality, or philosophy, whether absolutism, relativism, or reflexivism. With them all it is a matter of " either-or ". If the world is not mental-metaphysical, then it must be sensuous-physical. If it is not infinite, then it must be finite. If it does not exist absolutely, then it must exist as a relation.

In contradistinction to every one of these,

Buddhism stands out as that unique form of mental life with which in this conflict neither concept nor object remains victor, save in the sense that the union of both, *i.e.* nourishing, the Grasping process, becomes Actuality. Life, Actuality, is not a spiritual value, not a material value, but the union of both: life is a mind-form. And this is carried out not through any immediate or mediate mode of knowing, but as a growing process of which the sufficient reason is ignorance.

Ignorance is that in which knowing and living experience, world and I, as in a common root, come together. "A first beginning of ignorance-fettered beings is not discernible." In Ignorance beings are joined to Samsara; in the ceasing of Ignorance they live out the breaking loose from Samsara, Cessation, Extinguishing (*nirodho nibbānam*).

Conceptual beginninglessness is not only a dialectual bungle corresponding somewhat to the saying of Pythagoras that the world has no beginning according to *Being* (objectively), but only according to *Concept* (subjectively); but it is the Actuality of beginningless Grasping.

"How, O Lord, to the knowing, the seeing, does Ignorance subside and Knowledge arise?—If he knows, sees eye (ear, nose, tongue, body, thinking), O monk, as transient, Ignorance subsides in him, Knowledge arises in him. If he knows, sees forms (sounds, smells, flavours, touches, things) as transient, Ignorance subsides in him, Knowledge arises in him. If he knows, sees eye-consciousness (ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, thinking-consciousness) as transient, Ignorance subsides in him, Knowledge

arises in him. If he knows, sees eye-contact (ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, thinking-contact) as transient, Ignorance subsides in him, Knowledge arises in him. If he knows, sees that which is experienced through eye-contact (ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, thinking-contact) in the way of pleasure or pain or neither pleasure nor pain, as transient, Ignorance subsides in him, Knowledge arises in him" (Samyutta Nikāya III., p. 31).

And further : " Is there, Lord, a thing, through the disappearing of which Ignorance disappears in the monk and Knowledge arises ?—There is, monk, a thing through the disappearing of which Ignorance disappears, Knowledge arises.—What sort of thing is that through the disappearing of which Ignorance disappears in the monk, Knowledge arises ?—Even Ignorance, O monk, is this one thing through the disappearing of which Ignorance disappears, Knowledge arises.—And how, O Lord, in the knowing, the seeing, does Ignorance disappear, Knowledge arise ?—If he knows, sees the eye (and so on, as above) as transient, in him Ignorance disappears, Knowledge arises" (Samyutta Nikāya III., pp. 49, 50).

Yet once more : The cognition, " In being delivered is the knowledge of deliverance," is no immediate act of cognition wherein consciousness becomes master of itself ; also it is no mediate act of cognition in which it becomes master through the intermediary of the concepts. In both these cases I would *become* that which I *am* ; in the former case, a subject in itself ; in the latter case, an object in itself. In right insight, however, I do not become what I *am*, but I become that which

I *can become* through insight, resolve, and effort—a mere Grasping process.

I *am* not something that can depart out of Samsara for ever; I *become* it only by comprehending myself as a thing liable to ceasing; and in comprehending myself, I also encompass myself, and depart out of Samsara like a flame which, taking up no nourishment, encompasses itself, and proceeds towards extinguishing.

If the statement holds good: “I *am* something that can depart out of Samsara”, then a cosmic catastrophe might also very well produce final extinguishing; but such a thing is impossible. The cosmic catastrophe, the play of the Kappas, makes no breach in the play of Kamma. The end which the Buddha teaches is no annihilation, as natural science understands that word, but it is a process of constant growing in understanding, and corresponding fading away of ignorance.

The first reaction to this Doctrine of Ignorance is, naturally, that the person concerned who hears it says: “Prove that to me! Where is your proof that behind this whole endless organism of life, together with all its interpretations, there stands Ignorance as sufficient reason?”

Of proof in the ordinary sense of the word, as something that can be proved through another thing, there is nothing here; for such a proof implies a conceptual standpoint outside of the object to be proven. But here we have to do with Grasping itself, which swallows up into itself the whole of Actuality, and leaves no standpoint outside itself. To seek to grasp Grasping itself is unthinkable and impossible, and resembles the attempt of a moving

ship to get ahead of its own bow-wave. But not on that account is Ignorance an object of Faith, an undemonstrability in itself. Between these two stands the *self-proof through self*, which, as such, proves that *between mere knowledge and living experience there is no fundamental opposition*, but that here also, as everywhere, there exists only a difference in the phase of growth, in the same way that between Ignorance and Knowledge there exists no fundamental opposition, but only a difference in the phase of growth. It must be well borne in mind that so long as one encounters a fundamental opposition within Actuality, there is no real Brahmacariya, no real life of purity, such as the Buddha teaches. Being and Non-being are opposites ; food and eater are opposites, and thereby something with regard to which one obtains one's measure of knowledge at the price of the necessity for Faith. Only when all has become a grasping process, only then do the two opposites cease, only then does the Dhamma swing resistless through an Actuality which fits in with it, because it, the Dhamma, fits in with Actuality ; and only then is real Brahmacariya possible of being lived out as the transition from beginninglessness Grasping to final No-more-grasping.

Grasping and No-more-grasping, these are not opposites but different phases of the same process of growth.

Grasping, because having Ignorance as sufficient reason, is beginninglessness, and possibility of ceasing, in one. And it proves itself such, on the one hand through the possibility of being able to trace ever farther back into Samsara the tracks of

Grasping, as memory of previous life (*pubbenivāsa-sati*); while, on the other hand, it proves itself such in the living experience of Ceasing, of Extinguishing (*nirodho nibbānaṃ*).

## FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

### RE-BIRTH

WHENCE springs life ?

This question, *Whence springs life?* is answered like everything else, according to degree and depth of knowledge ; and as a consequence is answered in quite different ways according to whether I believe in life (as a believer), or whether I seek to make it an object of conceiving (as a scientist), or whether I live it out as a grasping process (as a Buddhist).

According to Faith's understanding of things, as regards my essence, my soul springs from God ; from my parents springs only the gross garment of the soul. According to Science's apprehension of things, I spring wholly and entirely from my parents ; and my mental functions are just functions of nature, of the generative material (female ovum, male sperm) provided by these parents ; according to the Buddhist doctrine of Actuality I spring from my own action. Beings are *kammayoni*, *sprung from the maternal womb of action*.

To the purely mental - metaphysical birth imagined by Faith, to the purely sensuous-physical birth imagined by Science, stands opposed the *conceptual-metaphysical*, the Kammic, re-birth set

forth by Buddhism. The Buddha teaches, as also do the Faith-religions, that parents only provide the matter for the new clothing of life. Ovum and sperm are not, as Science teaches, life itself, but only the materials of life endowed with all the tendencies to life, which tendencies, in order to attain actualisation, must be vitalised ; and this vitalising takes place, not, as Faith believes, through the action of a divine, metaphysical force called soul or whatever else one pleases, but through the consciousness of a perishing form of life, which, at the moment when the old form collapses under it and dies, lays hold of new material in a new maternal womb, and here, without a break, carries on further its play of grasping. Life is a single, unbroken process of Grasping in which from time to time there takes place only a change of the layer of material—an event which in common speech is called “ death ”, but to right insight reveals itself as a *self-inheriting*, inasmuch as the consciousness with its entire conceptual content lays hold in a new place, and goes working on. Therefore is it said : “ Heirs of action (*kammadāyadā*) are living beings ”. I am not judged by God. I am not judged by human society. I judge myself, in that the consciousness at the moment of death directs itself thither where, according to its value and content, according to its character, it can and must direct itself.

With this insight, Buddhism, precisely as the doctrine of Actuality, proves itself the only doctrine in which the question, “ *How must I comport myself?* ” issues directly from the question, “ *What am I?* ” Action in its consequences cannot arrive at pure expression ; either because a God performs



the arbitrary act of forgiveness of sins, or because upon the path from the deed to its consequence, in purely mechanical fashion something is lost, somewhat as in the passing over from heat to motion, and from motion to heat, something is always lost which afterwards must be taken into account so as to maintain the validity of the law of the conservation of energy.

The morality of Buddhism does not work with such possibilities. Where action is not the function of an *I*, be it an *I* in the supersensuous-metaphysical sense, be it an *I* in the sensuous-physical sense, but where the *I becomes action itself*, there the *I* also becomes a result, a fruit of action.

There is no possibility whatever that the consequence of action might ever fail the *I*. Here there is no doer; here there is nothing done by him; there is only an uninterrupted action (*kamma*) which itself is fruit, itself ripens into fruit.

Not in the heights of the heavens, not in the depths of the sea,  
Not in the caves of the mountains, taking a refuge there,  
Nowhere at all may be found a single corner of earth,  
Where, taking footing, a man may be loosed from his evil deed.

(Dhammapada 127.)

I am the deed; I am the fruit of the deed. That means: An *I* in the sense of an *I-identity* (of a subjective or of an objective kind) is positively not present. *Nothing is present but action*. And action is that which, with every new action, assumes a new value, whether for good or for evil.

The *I*, the *I*-concept (*asmi-māno*) is neither the expression of a metaphysical *I*, as held by Faith, nor the outcome of adaptation and experience, as held by Science, but a process of growth springing

out of Ignorance, which belongs to its object as the perfume to the flower. "Suppose, for example, that the perfume of the white, or the red, or the blue, lotus is present. If someone should say: 'To the petal belongs the perfume', or 'To the colour belongs the perfume', or, 'To the pistils belongs the perfume', would such an one be answering rightly?"—"No, brother."—"And how should one answer rightly?"—"To the whole flower belongs the perfume, one would answer rightly."—"Even so, ye brothers, do I say, 'I am', not of the Form, not of Sensation, not of Perception, not of the Tendings, and not of Consciousness. But also I say not this 'I am', of something outside of the Form (Sensation, Perception, Tendings, Consciousness). Albeit I embrace an 'I am' in these Five Grasping-groups, yet I do not perceive an 'I am'" (Khandha Samyutta 89; Samyutta Nikāya III., p. 130).

These two, concept and object, constitute a single process of growth which has its sufficient reason in Ignorance. The *I* is no delusion, which one might think away. It is there; it is Actuality. It is not, however, on that account an *I* in itself, a metaphysical entity. It is, like everything else, a process of growth, whose way and manner of being lived out depends upon the antecedent conditions of its growing.

"How now, Lord Gotama? Is he who acts the same as he who feels (*so karoti so patisamvediyati*)?"—"He who acts is the same as he who feels',—that, Brahmin, is one end."—"How then, Lord Gotama? Is he who acts another than he who feels?"—"He who acts is another than he

who feels,'—that, Brahmin, is the other end. Overcoming these two ends, the Accomplished One points out the Doctrine in the middle : In dependence upon Ignorance, the Concepts [and so on] ” (Nidāna Samyutta II., pp. 76, 77).

As the flame of one watch of the night is not the same as that of the following, or of the preceding, watch, but also is not another—as the fruit is not the same as the seed, but also is not another ; so the being of one form of existence is not the same as that of the one following, or of the one preceding, but also is not another. An unbroken action, an unbroken Grasping is present, in which the appearance of breach is brought about through the change of strata in what is grasped through what is called “ death ”. The Grasping goes on without a break ; the only change is in what is grasped.

In order to be present here I must have died there. What there is called exit, dying, here is called entrance, birth. The fact of my birth derives, not from parents, not from God, but from my own previous dying. Dying is nothing but a backward view of birth ; and birth nothing but a forward view of death. In truth, the two are the same, a phase of unbroken Grasping. To the question : “ Whence springs birth ? ” Buddhism answers : “ Out of one's own dying.” And it springs thence because an *I*-self which dies, which is born, is not there at all. For there is present nothing but an unbroken action, of which death and birth are mere phases.

Whether this action runs its course in the way of good action, or whether it runs its course in the way of bad action, is all the same regarded from

the standpoint of the sufficient reason. It is action, Grasping, here as there! Birth in the heavens of the gods is still birth, just like every other birth; and thereby is exposed to the necessity of death, just like every other. "For the born there is no such thing as not dying (*n'atthi jātassa amaranam*)" (Samyutta Nikāya II.).

It is all action, Grasping, with Ignorance as sufficient reason in the background, differing only according to the degree of density of the Ignorance. "It is thirst that produces men (*tanhā janeti purisaṃ*)" (Samyutta Nikāya II.). All action is thirst, good as well as bad; and a real change in the play sets in only with the ceasing of all Grasping, when Ignorance with ever-progressing attenuation (*tanutta*) finally comes to the point of disappearing, when action, good as bad, ceases; and that mode of action sets in which "leads to the ceasing of all action."

"These four kinds of action by me have been known, realised, and proclaimed. Which four? There is action, dark with dark fruit. There is action, light with light fruit. There is action, dark-light with dark-light fruit. And there is action neither dark nor light with fruit neither dark nor light, which leads to the ceasing of all action.

"And what is action, dark with dark fruit? There a certain person performs evil action in deeds, evil action in words, evil action in thoughts; and later on, arises in the evil world. There arisen, he meets with evil contacts, he experiences evil sensations, wholly painful, like the beings in the hell-world. Thus, according to the nature of the being, does his arising take place (*bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti*).

As he acts, accordingly does he arise ; and having arisen, he meets with evil contacts. Thus are beings heirs of action (*kammadāyadā*), say I. This is called action, dark with dark fruit.

“And what is action, light with light fruit? There a certain person performs good action in deeds, good action in words, good action in thoughts. Accordingly he arises in a good world. There arisen, he meets with good contacts. Meeting with good contacts, he experiences good sensations, wholly pleasant like the Subhakinna gods. Thus, according to the nature of the being, does his arising take place. As he acts, accordingly does he arise. Having arisen, he meets with good contacts. Thus are beings heirs of action.

“And what is action, dark-light with dark-light fruit? There a certain person performs action that is evil as well as good in deeds, in words, and in thoughts. Accordingly he arises in a world that is evil as well as good. There arisen he meets with evil, as well as with good, contacts. Meeting with evil, as well as with good, contacts, he experiences evil, as well as good, sensations mingled with the painful and the pleasurable, like men and some gods and some fallen creatures. Thus, according to the nature of the being does his arising take place. As he acts, accordingly does he arise. Having arisen he meets with evil, as well as with good, contacts. Thus are beings heirs of action.

“And what is action, not dark, not light, with fruit not dark, not light, that leads to the ceasing of action? What there is of action, dark with dark fruit—the train of thought (*cetanā*) leading to its ceasing ; what there is of action, light with light

fruit—the train of thought leading to its ceasing ; what there is of action, dark-light with dark-light fruit—the train of thought leading to its ceasing : all this is called action, not dark, not light, with fruit, not dark, not light, that leads to the ceasing of all action. These four kinds of action by me have been known, realised and proclaimed ” (Majjhima Nikāya 57).

The description of the procedure in re-birth runs its course in accordance with the peculiar arabesque-like stiffness of the Texts, always after the same schema.

“ And further still, Udayi, I have shown my disciples the way upon which my disciples in manifold wise may call to mind their former dwellings, namely, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, an hundred births, a thousand births, an hundred thousand births, many inward-turning world-epochs (*samvattakappa*), many outward-turning world-epochs (*vivattakappa*), many inward- and outward-turning world-epochs. ‘ There I had such and such a name, such a family, such a caste, such a calling ; such and such weal and woe did I encounter ; such and such was my life-ending. Thence disappearing, I emerged again there. There now I had such and such a name ; such a family, such a caste, such a calling ; such and such weal and woe did I encounter ; such and such was my life-ending. Thence disappearing, I have emerged again here ! Thus does he call to mind in manifold wise his former dwellings as regards content and locality. Just as if a man, Udayi, went from his own village to another village,

and then from this village to another village, and from this village went back again to his own village. Such a man would then thus think to himself : ' I have gone from my own village to that village. There have I thus stood, thus sat, thus spoken, thus kept silent. From this village I then have gone to that village ; there also have I thus stood, thus sat, thus spoken, thus kept silence. From this village I then have returned to my own village.' In the same way also, Udayi, have I shown my disciples the way upon which my disciples in manifold wise may remember their former dwellings " (Majjhima Nikāya 77).

How is that to be understood ?

I reply : This does not permit of being comprehended in the scientific mode of logic and experiment. Such a thing, of necessity, would always be an *object* of comprehending, thus, could never concern comprehending itself. But also, this does not need to be *believed* ; and indeed, on the same grounds. An object of Faith is everything that lies *beyond* comprehending. Here, however, we have to do, not with a beyond of comprehension but with comprehending itself. Here every attempt to comprehend in the ordinary sense of the word, resembles the attempt of a man who seeks to investigate the depths of a body of water by ever and again striking the uppermost strata with his hand. As such a man, through such attempts, would only spoil his chance of success, so a person who seeks to grasp conceptually the passing over of consciousness, will only spoil his chance of success. Here there remains no other possibility but realisation, in living out through discipline and reflection.

The power of remembering previous births is called in Pali the "memory of former dwelling (*pubbenivāsa-sati*)", and holds good precisely as that which its name indicates : a form of remembering, of recollectedness (*sati*). As such it requires no conceptual procedure, neither in the irrational sense peculiar to Faith, nor in the rational sense peculiar to Science, but an actual procedure consisting in the clarifying, the purification, of the instrument which is to make sound forth again the deep note of past existence.

Here we are all speaking as might the blind of colour ; but I think I am entitled here to use the comparison of the dark room. If, blinded by the turmoil and the light of day, one looks into such a room one sees nothing ! If, however, one lets one's eyes rest patiently on the darkness, it may well be that it becomes light and one begins to recognise things.

But merely to let thought rest upon the dark background, here does not of itself alone suffice. If the mirror is dim and dirty, all patience and persistence will be in vain ! The mirror does not reflect images, and must be cleaned. In the same way, if the life is dirty, all patience and persistence in letting thought rest avails nothing for remembering ; the life must be cleansed, and then it may well happen that one can read therein. And this purification has to come about through knowledge and conduct, in such wise that knowledge strengthens and energises conduct, and conduct knowledge. In short : One must tread the Noble Eightfold Path if one wishes to experience what on the basis of right insight permits of being experienced as



the following up of the consciousness out of this form of existence into its previous phases,—the attainment of the knowledge of one's re-births.

This power of retrospective memory is not limited to the present Kappa (Kalpa), but passes away out beyond it into the past. The Buddha tells of himself that his power of remembering the past goes back to the ninety-first Kappa, counting backwards. One Kappa is only the outcome of growth of another, becomes another; and grows with all its characteristics into the next Kappa.

Conceptual thinking here stands powerless, and of its own strength can do nothing but advance the indirect proof which takes this shape—that Actuality offers nothing which contradicts this understanding of the immediate passing over of one form of existence into the next. Here obstacles of a subjective, as of an objective, character, of an inner as of an outer kind, have to be cleared away,—obstacles which on one hand concern the power, on the other, the possibilities corresponding to them.

The inner subjective obstacle is the false idea of consciousness.

The Buddha calls that which passes over, consciousness (*viññāṇam*).

“ If, Ananda, consciousness did not descend into the maternal womb, could then at all mind-form take shape therein ? ” (Dīgha Nikāya 15).

Everything is Grasping, Form as well as Sensation, Perception, Tendings, and Consciousness; only, consciousness is that form of Grasping in which the grasping process *includes itself in its mode of grasping*. There where the grasping

process names itself, it names itself consciousness ; here the name becomes the thing itself.

As everywhere, so also here, Buddhism stands between and above the opposites, Faith and Science. Faith (as Pantheism) makes out of what passes from one form of existence to another an existent in itself, an autonomous enduring something, a soul, which, timeless and spaceless, passes on precisely in virtue of its autonomous nature. This is the doctrine called the "transmigration of the soul". Science makes out of it a process of vibration, a wave, which, like every other wave, passes over in time and space, and strikes wherever it finds its correspondence, like the electric wave or the wave of light. Just as light and electricity pulse forth in all directions and objectify themselves there only where the corresponding receiver is found, so here consciousness would pulse forth in all directions and objectify itself there where it finds the corresponding receiver.

The Buddha in the most emphatic manner rejects the idea of an, *as such*, transmigrating consciousness, as is set forth with considerable energy in the Mahātanhasamkhaya Sutta, the 38th Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya. There is no such thing as a consciousness which exists *as such*, solely for itself (*Anaññaṃ* = without another).

The consciousness which passes over to the new scene of action is called *Patisandhi-viññāṇam* (re-binding consciousness). This expression, so far as my knowledge goes, is not to be found in the Suttas themselves. It is, however, generally current in Ceylon, and may be identical, so far as I can see, with what in the Suttas (for example, in the 106th

Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya) is called *sanvattani-kam viññāṇam*, leading-on-consciousness. Of it must hold good what holds good of every other moment of consciousness, as expressed by the Buddha in the dictum: "Without dependence (*aññatra paccayā*) no consciousness arises". The corresponding schema runs: "In dependence upon eye and forms arises eye-consciousness", and so on through the Six Points of Support.

In dependence upon what, now, does the *re-binding consciousness* arise? Does it arise as eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, or thought-consciousness?

The idea that the dying eye here looks upon the new abode there, that the dying thought here cognises the new abode there; and that in the falling together of both, *Patisandhi-viññāṇam* springs up, is the prevailing view in Ceylon. Thence I have myself taken over this view, and up to a short time ago, adhered to it. But according to what I now see, in *Patisandhi-viññāṇam* there is no upspringing of a new consciousness between the dying being here and the new abode there. If there were, one could not understand why out of this process consciousness should not extract a new energising of its own mind-form exactly as in every other rising consciousness. It would be impossible to see why consciousness should inseminate the new abode instead of, as up till now, enfleshing itself in the old mind-form. If the case were as said, every death would require an uninterrupted power of activity of the senses,—which contradicts all experience.

So far as I now see, we have here to do, not with

the good pleasure of a selecting consciousness which lets drop the life-material seized by it, as a vulture lets drop the lump of carrion it has seized in favour of another, and a better. It is also not a question here of the dropping of the life-materials seized by the consciousness, which drop from it, the consciousness, like the lump of carrion from the vulture for whom it has become too heavy. Both here would be synonymous with a consciousness loosing itself from itself. But what is grasped is no mere piece of booty, no ready-made "house of the soul", dead nature, standing over against consciousness as mind; but it is mind-form, *i.e.* enfleshed consciousness itself. And what above I called the *inner obstacle* to the understanding of this process, is the idea that consciousness in death loses its "object", whether because it so pleases it, or because this object, in accordance with the law of gravitation, drops away from it. Consciousness does not forsake its object, for this object is mind-form, enfleshed consciousness itself. What remains behind, the dead mass, is not an object of consciousness; the object of consciousness is Form, Sensation, Perception, Tendings; and all of them, together with consciousness, are merged in that Grasping which goes on grasping without a break, not according to the incomprehensible laws of a mental caprice, nor according to the comprehensible laws of a physical fall, but according to the self-comprehending laws of nutrition. .

This growth-like character of re-birth gives to the problem of retributive justice, of compensation, of expiation, that *actual* character which makes Buddhism a riddle to everyone who confronts it

only as might a traveller some chance object in his path.

The Buddha calls himself the *Vibhajjavādī*, *i.e.* he who teaches differentiation in action, who teaches that the result of deed, the fruit of action, does not always correspond to what logic might hold to be just and right.

Only from this *actual*, Kammic, growth-like character are explicable those—for conceptual thinking—obvious contradictions, nay, horrors, that upon evil action in one life, a good re-birth may follow ; and upon good action in one life an evil re-birth may follow, as is set forth in detail in the Mahākam-mavibhanga Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 136).

This Sutta shows that if, after a life of evil action a man arises in a good world, such a person at some period earlier or later in the past, has consciously done good, or, in his dying moment, has achieved and ripened right insight.

That means : The fruit of action does not follow the caprice of a divine omnipotence, nor the ordered necessity of physical processes, but follows the laws of nutrition which are inaccessible to calculation, not because they are arbitrary but because they swallow up all logic within themselves. The fruit of action is neither the purely temporal succession of causality accessible to conceptual thinking, nor the super-temporal interaction of divine predestination, but the dependent-simultaneous mode of growth, in which one moment may be displaced by another. In processes of growth physical laws do not hold good, but only the laws of nutrition, as is shown by the incomprehensible selective actions of the physical organism in stomach, glands, and so

forth. A man may be "averse to discipline", and, to conceptual thinking, an evil outcome may be expected for him; but he may have accomplished that act of cognition in which everything "is wholly and completely removed". "Such men the stream of the Doctrine sweeps high (*dhammasoto nibbāhati*)" (Anguttara Nikāya V., p. 140).

The process of re-birth is neither an autonomous, purely mental process, as in the "transmigration of the soul" theory, nor a sense-perceptible, traceable physical process, as in the scientific doctrine of heredity. But it is a process of growth, a further extended growing of the consciousness, in which it is a matter of indifference whether consciousness is present *as such* (as, for instance, in human beings), or whether it stands at any other phase of its development. Consciousness is always present, all one whether it is present as a Grasping unconscious of itself, in which I *am* consciousness, *i.e.* as embryonal form, or whether it has attained to that phase of development wherein it embraces itself, in which I can say I *have* consciousness.

So much upon this obscure subject which must remain obscure; not because it is obscure in itself, but because it is so as long as one seeks to comprehend it with the consciousness alone. He will never penetrate darkness and its secrets who seeks to do so with a light in his hands. Here light is shed only by living out.

And now to come to what I have called above the *external obstacles*.

These external obstacles are called Space and Time.

What are Space and Time?

The answer to this question turns entirely upon how the question, *What is Actuality?* is answered. So long as one envisages Actuality as a mere object of consciousness, time and space are the vessels within which Actuality runs its course—time the vessel for the processes, space the vessel for objects. Time and Space is the necessary supplement to the exact scientific understanding of Actuality as a play of mass and motion. A fall requires fall-space and fall-time.

That mass and motion are present, that fall is present, that therewith are also present time and space in the sense understood by Science—this is indubitable. That a falling stone requires time in order to reach the ground, and that between it and the earth there exists a fall-space, is perfectly clear. But it ought not to be forgotten that all this only holds good as long as Actuality is something which stands over against me, the observer, as an object, as a play of masses, *i.e.* that all this only holds good in a *hypothetical understanding of the world-mass*. For in truth there is no such thing as a standpoint forth from which I look out upon Actuality. In truth, this standpoint itself is also Actuality; and the results which it matures hold good only so long as one allows it its purely hypothetical existence. If Actuality is lived out, *i.e.* if the standpoint from which hitherto it could be handled as a mere object of consciousness becomes what it really is, Actuality *in statu nascendi*, then it is all over with the hypothetical understanding of things, of exact science; it is all over with its understanding of mass and motion, even as with its understanding of space and time.

Actuality as living experience has no time for time, has no space for space, taking them in that positive sense which exact science confers on both, as a necessary complement to mass and movement.

As everywhere, so also here, Buddhism pursues its path of the mean between, and above, the opposites. Time and space to it are certainly not the positive values that they are in Science, whether in the absolute form according to Newton, whether in the relative form according to Einstein. But also they are not to it mere delusions, in contradistinction to an eternity beyond time and space ; they are *living experience*, just like everything else. *Time as living experience is the power of consciousness ; space as living experience is the possibility of this power. I know no other time save consciousness ; and I know no other space save the possibilities of the actualisation of this power, consciousness.*

I know very well that there is a time, a space, which are present apart from me, the consciousness, just as there are actualities which are present apart from me. But that does not prevent their all being present *as such*, i.e. as conceived in time and space, there only where is present a standpoint from which they can be conceived. Time and space are only present where there are definite objects. These are only present where is a standpoint outside of them. And this is only present where Actuality is not lived out but only known through the brain.

It must be well borne in mind that the understanding of the passing over of consciousness depends upon the comprehension of time and space ; and that this comprehension depends upon the comprehension of Actuality. So long as Actuality



is something that has to be comprehended, there results the insoluble problem of a consciousness passing over in time and space, which as such must of necessity be a free consciousness, a consciousness "in itself". As soon as Actuality is lived out as Grasping itself, the whole problem falls to the ground, from its antecedent conditions onwards. Consciousness cannot pass over in time because it is itself time as living experience. And it cannot pass over in space because space is not a positive magnitude which must be passed through, but the mere possibility of immediate laying hold in a new site.

So much concerning these things so obscure for us all, which *cannot* be excogitated, and *must not* be accepted on mere faith. The concept can neither conceive itself, nor believe in itself. These things must be lived out in inward striving, in steady inward purification, in patient, deep reflection. Then it may well be that some day the darkness will become light.

For us everything here is still dark ; but it seems to me that the assured insight, *Here is nothing that contradicts Actuality!* of itself gives to thinking force and direction. And according to what I have lived out in myself, the idea of space and time, as given by mere thinking, is a main obstacle to a right beginning. Whoever exerts himself to comprehend how consciousness can traverse time and space without being present *as such*, as free consciousness, will end pitiably, either by making consciousness into an entity, or by making it into a form of vibration like light and electricity. In both cases he ends pitiably, because in the former case he

makes Buddhism into a form of Faith, in the latter case into a form of Science. Consciousness is neither cosmic vibration nor a self-existent entity in itself, but it is a grasping process which immediately (*apubbam acarimam*), not earlier, not later, grasps in that site where, according to the laws of nutrition, it *has* to grasp.

## FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

### NIBBANA

IF the Kamma-doctrine, i.e. the doctrine of re-birth according to deeds, represents the morality of Buddhism, the Nibbana-doctrine represents its religion.

Morality, in the Buddhist insight, is conduct in the sense of *self-restraint from all self-seeking impulses and emotions*. Morality is discipline ; it is the combat with self-seeking in all its countless forms, open and concealed, mean and exalted, near and far. But it is not *simply* self-restraint from all these things. Were it so, it would be nothing but stupid asceticism, which merely from a craving for asceticism robs life of its flowers, and in their place leaves nothing but the barren satisfaction of having practised asceticism, of having done violence to oneself, of having betrayed oneself as regards the pleasures and enjoyments of life. In short : It would represent an unsatisfying outcome which the Buddha himself, in his Doctrine of the Middle Path, calls unsatisfying and vulgar, unworthy of the noble, against which he himself often contended, for example, when he argued with the Niganthas, those ascetics and haters, pure and simple, of the pleasures of life.

✓ Morality in Buddhism is not simply asceticism,

a stupid constraint of oneself out of pure love of self-constraint. It is the outcome of right insight, the result of insight into the *What am I?* I *must* practise morality. I *must* practise this self-restraint, if I am to remain in harmony with my insight, if I wish to maintain a good conscience towards myself.

According to right insight I am *without a self* (*an-attā*); I am self-free, selfless. The idea of an I-self, as already shown, is a process of growth having its origin in Ignorance as sufficient cause, hence, is something that must be got rid of, just like Ignorance. Ignorance, however, can be got rid of, not through a mediate act of conceiving, but only through growth in a new direction, even through knowledge and conduct, each mutually strengthening the other in the treading of the Eightfold Path. All that I do in the service of self happens, in truth, in the service of ignorance about myself, in the service of an impulsion towards life which has maintained itself despite the new correct insight—a remainder “to be borne pain fully”, which reminds me of the wretchedness of beginningless ignorance; and also at the same time reminds me to lay aside this remainder, this atavism that brings shame on my better knowledge.

Thus the morality of Buddhism stands at the living mean between knowledge and the religion of Buddhism. I must restrain myself as an immediate result of the insight into what I am, which points along a straight path, as another immediate result, to the *Whence-Whither?* Here, out of knowledge one passes in unbroken transition to morality; and from morality, in unbroken transition, to religion.

This is the path upon which Buddhism proves itself a doctrine of Actuality for him who has the desire to follow its counsel, and not merely to treat it conceptually, *i.e.* remain standing outside it, but who wishes to live it.

Life in every form, from the lowest to the highest, from the amœba to the *homo sapiens*, is nutrition without a person nourished, a play of Grasping and nothing more, no matter whether this play of Grasping is present *as such*, whether it is lived out in *I*-consciousness or not. Behind every form of life stands Ignorance as sufficient reason. The form in which life is present for itself *as such*, in essence is no way different from that other form in which it is not present for itself *as such*. In essence there is no difference between life lived without consciousness and life lived with consciousness. The one, as the other, is nutrition, Grasping. And the distinction is present, not in essence but in development, since in all life that runs its course without consciousness there never comes about that last possible development in which life grasps also itself. In this grasping also of itself there resides no higher essence in itself, and therewith, no higher rights as compared with the animal; there is just Grasping, here as there! In this Grasping also of itself there resides only a task and a higher duty—the duty to make out of this *oneself* that which in unprejudiced consideration *can* be made out of it: the task of giving up, which is the ultimate task of all existence, its final possibility.

The ultimate duty of life is the unprejudiced consideration of life as it exhibits itself in this

*oneself*. The ultimate task of life is the realisation of the possibility given with this "*oneself*".

In this "*oneself*" lies everything—Ignorance and Knowledge, and the transition from the one to the other; Suffering and No-more-suffering, and the transition from the one to the other. It is the key-word in which the inconceivability of Samsara is revealed, and the gateway to knowledge pointed out through the showing of the way that leads knowledge from beginningless Grasping to final No-more-grasping.

Of religion there are many definitions. They are all false because all prejudiced. To define religion as the relation of man to God is just as prejudiced as it is to make of searching a search for God.

Religion is the development of life beyond itself, on one hand retrospectively, in the *Whence?* On the other hand anticipatively, in the *Whither?* *Religion is the practical application of the doctrine of evolution.* And the scientific doctrine of evolution which is presented as Darwinism and so forth is the purely hypothetical attempt at such a thing.

Certainly one can give a method of reading the world-mass, in which this latter is arranged according to its advancing phases of evolution. But that this is a purely hypothetical arrangement, a mere method of reading, at once follows from the fact that in order to give a real evolution one would have to know what evolution is, and that in order to know this one would require to have a standpoint from which evolution would permit of being measured. The world-mass, however, has no standpoint by which it permits of being measured, past which it is pushed, like the star in the eyepiece

of a telescope. And here once more one encounters the profoundly secret community of root between Science and Faith, in that the evolution-idea of Science, when it is fully thought out, absolutely requires nothing else but just the solid standpoint from which only it can be applied—God !

The whole immense hypothetical structure which Science erects in its doctrine of evolution, of necessity demands the solid standpoint from which alone the concept of evolution receives sense and meaning. That this solid ground is not the primordial cell, the primordial nebula, or whatever else of primordial-ness there may be, is clear to the thinking man without further words ; he refuses to be put off with infantilities of that sort. The solid ground from which alone the concept of evolution receives sense and meaning is just *God* ! And here, as everywhere, Science, when it dares to think things out to a conclusion, falls into Faith. And here, as everywhere, Buddhism goes its own lofty way between, and above, the opposites.

In Buddhism there is no fixed point by which evolution permits of being measured. Here there is only *a self-measurement* ; and yet there is an evolution here—that from Ignorance to Knowledge !

With the Buddhist starting-point of life is given an actual line of evolution—that from Grasping to No-more-grasping. Evolution is given here as living experience, as the only pure living experience, the living experience of cessation, of extinguishing, Nibbana.

*Nibbana* (Sanskrit, *Nirvana*) means extinguishing ; and in the Buddhist doctrine of Actuality the word bears that actual meaning which it *must* bear

in that Doctrine which teaches Actuality and is itself Actuality. Here the word conforms itself, abandons its malicious tricks, and gives itself, regardless of everything and completely, as that which it means. It tacitly acknowledges the Master who has tamed it.

Nibbana *means* extinguishing, and *is* extinguishing. It is nothing but that which the word expresses. The sense corresponds to the word; the word corresponds to the sense, there where Actuality lives itself out in its final possibility—Ceasing.

Extinguishing is a process such as one may observe in every expiring flame. Nibbana is a process just like every other process. Correspondingly there is a verb derived from it: he *nibbanats* (*nibbāyati, parinibbāyati*), the past participle belonging to it being *parinibbuto* (extinguished).

The phrases, “Already in this life extinguished (*ditth’eva dhamme parinibbuto*), or, “One who already in this existence is extinguishing (*ditth’eva dhamme parinibbāyamāno*)” are frequently to be found in the Texts. In the Parinibbana Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya II., 123), the Buddha calls himself the Extinguished (*parinibbuto*):

Discipline, mind-control, and wisdom,  
Freedom that is incomparable,  
All these things have been revealed  
By Gotama so high renowned.  
The Buddha who to insight came  
To the monks the Doctrine doth make known—  
The Teacher, the Ender of Suffering,  
The Seer, the Fully Extinguished One.

Of the inwardly freed monk, the Arahant, it is said: “He does not cling to anything in the world.



Not clinging, he is unshakable. Unshakable, he comes of himself to extinguishing (*paccattam yeva parinibbāyati*)” (Dīgha Nikāya II., 68). It is asked in the Samyutta Nikāya IV.; “How does it happen that some beings already in this existence come to extinguishing, others not?”

That is the verbal definition of Nibbana; the definition according to meaning is: “Nibbana is the ceasing of Lust, Hate, and Delusion (*rāgakhayo, dosakhayo, mohakhayo*)” (Samyutta Nikāya IV., p. 261 and elsewhere).

To realise Nibbana means to have living experience of the ceasing of Lust, Hate, and Delusion. Lust, Hate, and Delusion are the impulsions, the Āsavā which keep the life-process going—Craving, Thirst (*tanhā*) as such. The Arahant, the Saint, is a man in whom the impulsions are dried up (*khīnāsavo*). “Lust is a something (*kiñcano*), Hate is a something, Delusion is a something; these are given up by the monk in whom the Impulsions are dried up, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, incapable of new life, incapable of springing up anew again” (Majjhima Nikāya I., p. 298).

Such a monk, with the Impulsions dried up in him, is one who realises Nibbana, who has immediate living experience of the ceasing of the beginningless process of existence that has been living itself out in Ignorance and Thirst.

As in every process of extinguishing, here also one distinguishes between ceasing and having ceased. The former is called the Upādisesa Nibbānaṃ, or Sa-upādisesa-Nibbānaṃ; the latter, the An-upādisesa Nibbānaṃ. The former is the

extinguishing that is still subject to the Khandhas, to the Grasping-groups. The latter is the extinction that is free from all subjections and burdens.

The *Upādisesa Nibbānam* is that which resembles the flame that still burns on in extinguishing, without taking up nutriment—that burns on for a little while longer, just because the conditions are such that it is able so to burn on. It burns on towards extinguishing! Even so burns on towards extinguishing the Perfect One, the one in whom the Impulsions are dried up, he in whom Lust, Hate, and Delusion have ceased. This is the last body! This is the last laying down of the body! A new heaping-up, a new appearing, in any kind of new form of existence, no matter in what fashion it may be put together, never more takes place. And such an one no longer lives *through* the taking up of food, but *under* the taking up of food, since the true nutriments of the process of Grasping are not gross food and drink but Ignorance and Craving. Food and drink are not nutriment in themselves; they are nutriment only so long as Ignorance and Thirst stand behind them.

Nibbana is not a state but a process, the only pure process, no longer besmirched through objectivity. It is just the process in which the final possibility contained in existence is carried out—the process in which the possibility of ceasing becomes ceasing. Life is a process of nutrition without a nourished, which is kept going through ignorance about itself, and is at the same time beginningless and terminable, without commencement and ceasable. The conceptual value in

which beginninglessness and terminability are embraced is Ignorance.

Life springs wholly and entirely out of Ignorance, and wholly and entirely is embraced in Lust, Hate, and Delusion. Here, in the fruit of Ignorance, Ignorance is to be got at. Here Knowledge is lived out. "Knowable things and Knowledge will I show you, ye monks. Give heed ! And what, ye monks, are knowable things ? Form is a knowable thing ; Sensation is a knowable thing ; Perception is a knowable thing ; the Tendings are knowable things ; Consciousness is a knowable thing ; these are what are called knowable things. And what, ye monks, is Knowledge ? What there is of the ceasing of Lust, of the ceasing of Hate, of the ceasing of Delusion, this is called Knowledge " (Samyutta Nikāya III., p. 26).

Lust, Hate, and Delusion are not functions of life ; but they are life itself as it blossoms forth out of its seed, Ignorance ; they are Grasping, at work. Lust, Hate, and Delusion cease, means, Ignorance ceases. Ignorance ceases, means, the sufficient reason of life ceases. The sufficient reason of life ceases, means, life ceases.

" Through the complete and utter ceasing of Ignorance, the ceasing of the Tendings. Through the ceasing of the Tendings, the ceasing of Consciousness. Through the ceasing of Consciousness, the ceasing of Mind-form. Through the ceasing of Mind-form, the ceasing of the Six Senses. Through the ceasing of the Six Senses, the ceasing of Contact. Through the ceasing of Contact, the ceasing of Sensation. Through the ceasing of Sensation, the ceasing of Thirst. Through the

ceasing of Thirst, the ceasing of Grasping. Through the ceasing of Grasping, the ceasing of Coming-to-be. Through the ceasing of Coming-to-be, the ceasing of Birth. Through the ceasing of Birth, the ceasing of old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair."

Now, like everything else in Buddhism, its Nibbana-doctrine also permits of being interpreted in the sense of Science as well as in the sense of Faith. In the latter case Nibbana becomes a metaphysical reality, an eternal being, a correlate of the self (*attā*) ; in the former case an annihilation is made out of it.

All Faith, in the last analysis, is faith in life as a value in itself, as a direct necessity, living itself in and through itself. And in the ultimate, for Faith there is but *one sin*—doubt of life, which is synonymous with doubt of God. For God is nothing but that in which life, where it is consciously present *as* such, justifies itself to itself. To believe in God means : Life believes in itself, and uses the possibility of final ceasing, as with consciousness it is opened up, in order to carry on consciously what hitherto it has carried on unconsciously—the ever-repeated recognition of life in ever-repeated acts of Grasping.

Such a believer reasons about Nibbana as shown by the Buddha, after the following fashion :

" To be sure, Nibbana is the ceasing of Lust, Hate, and Delusion ; but that does not mean the ceasing of life altogether, but only the ceasing of the empirical I, and thereby, purely automatically, a purification of the eternal metaphysical self (*attā*). As the blue sky is present when the clouds are gone,

so is the eternal self (*attā*) present when Lust, Hate, and Delusion are removed."

For such a person, Nibbana is the metaphysical reality of the *I*-self living out itself (*attā*).

In support of this way of understanding the matter, ever and again the well-known passage from the Udāna 8 is quoted : " There is, ye monks, an unborn (*ajātam*), un-become (*abhūtam*), unmade (*akātam*), uncompounded (*asankhatam*). If, ye monks, this unborn, un-become, unmade, uncompounded, were not, an escape from the born, become, made, compounded, would not be discernible. But because, ye monks, there is an unborn, un-become, unmade, uncompounded, there fore an escape from the born, become, made, compounded, is discernible."

Here is manifested a universal prejudice. The Buddha does not speak of an *unconditioned*, but only of a *non-conditioned*. And what this non-conditioned is, he expressly says in another passage. " The non-conditioned (*asankhatam*) will I show you, and the way that leads to the non-conditioned. Give heed ! *And what, ye monks, is the non-conditioned ? That which is the ceasing of Lust, the ceasing of Hate, the ceasing of Delusion—this, ye monks, is called the non-conditioned.* And what is the way that leads to the non-conditioned ? Inward quieting and clear vision—this is the way that leads to the non-conditioned " (Samyutta Nikāya IV., p. 162).

This insight can never come about through conceptual thinking, since through the latter no actual knowledge is produced, but only new states of tension (*sankhārā*),—not insight into life, but

only new processes of living. This insight can only come about through inward quieting, *i.e.* through the coming to rest of the attempts at Grasping. The light of the concepts must be extinguished if the light of Actuality is to flash up out of the depths ; and then there is the clear vision (*vipassana*) on the basis of which one then lives it out, knowing : *Thus it is !*

The non - conditioned, the non - compounded, which the Buddha teaches and shows, is not an *unconditioned*, and, as such, a something existent in itself ; but it is a growth yielded by the conditioned,—that unique growth wherein the formings together, the Sankharas, cease ; where there is no more *upbuilding* but instead, *unbuilding*,—action that leads to the cessation of all action.

For beginninglessness there is only *one* proof, the proof through itself, *i.e.* ceasing. This ceasing is not an autonomous process which is carried out of itself,—in which case it would resemble a light which has the power of bringing itself to an end. It is also no mechanical process carried out from an external standpoint,—in which case it would resemble an extinguished (passive) light. But it is the immediate-mediate process of growth out of Ignorance into Knowledge. That must be repeated, again and ever again !

“ And what, ye monks, is the way that leads to the non-conditioned ? The insight into the body, ye monks !• That is the way that leads to the non-conditioned ” (Samyutta Nikāya IV., 359).

And how does one arrive at this insight ? “ Practise concentration, ye monks ! A mentally unified monk cognises in accordance with Actuality

(*yathābhūtam*). And what does he cognise in accordance with Actuality? The arising and passing away of the Form (Sensation, Perception, the Tendings, Consciousness) does he cognise in accordance with Actuality" (Samyutta Nikāya III., p. 13).

Just as little as Nibbana is some kind of metaphysical state of being, is it a physical annihilation. Here nothing is annihilated; here nothing is eternalised; here is carried out nothing but the completion, in accord with Actuality, of the beginning given with the Doctrine of Suffering.

Nibbana is not *simply* extinguishing; it is the Extinguishing of Suffering, the Ceasing of Suffering. Nibbana receives sense and meaning only through the Doctrine of Suffering. Only when life has become wholly and entirely suffering, then only is produced the antecedent condition to the *experience*, Nibbana. Life must have become Suffering, in order of itself to be able to live out Nibbana.

What is Suffering in Buddhism?

The answer to the question, "What is Suffering?" as the first of the Four Noble Truths teaches, runs thus: "*The Five Grasping-groups are Suffering*". The Five Grasping-groups, however, are also wholly and entirely life; and only when life is wholly and entirely embraced in them, lived out in them, only then, along with the unalloyed, unmitigated painfulness of life, is also given the possibility of its ceasing.

"Whoso, ye monks, rejoices in the Form rejoices in Suffering. Whoso rejoices in Suffering, not freed is he from Suffering, say I. Whoso rejoices in Sensation (Perception, the Tendings, Consciousness)

rejoices in Suffering. Whoso rejoices in Suffering, not freed is he from Suffering, say I."

"Whoso, however, ye monks, does not rejoice in the Form does not rejoice in Suffering. Freed is he from Suffering, say I. Whoso does not rejoice in Sensation (Perception, the Tendings, Consciousness) does not rejoice in Suffering. Freed is he from Suffering, say I" (Samyutta Nikāya III., 31).

From a purely worldly standpoint, one can regard life as joy equally as well as one can regard it as sorrow, since both, so far as transiency is concerned, are of equal value. With regard to transiency, pessimism and optimism are equally right. For the unprejudiced person, of course, here also will hold good the Buddha's saying: "Suffering here is more (*ādīnavo ettha bhiiyyo*)". "What think ye, O monks, is more—the tears that, wailing and lamenting, ye have shed, hurrying on, wandering on, upon this long way, united to the unloved, sundered from the loved, or the waters of the Four Great Oceans?" (Samyutta Nikāya II., 179).

From the point of view of right insight, however, the case presents itself otherwise. Here life becomes wholly and entirely Suffering, because in all its forms of action (as Form, Sensation, Perception, Tendings, Consciousness) it is Suffering. And it is Suffering in all these because it is Grasping (*upādāna*). And Grasping is Suffering because it has behind it as sufficient reason, not an *I*-self, whether in the metaphysical-mental sense understood by Faith, whether in the physical-corporeal sense understood by Science, but because—sad to say!—it has nothing behind it but ignorance about itself. Ignorance is the mysterious



Mysagetes which leads the five-membered chorus of life, and draws from it an endless variety of melodies, noble and vulgar, gross and fine, self-seeking and selfless.

• Only when one cognises : “ There is nothing here but this Grasping which remains simply Grasping, let it present itself in what guise it will ”, only then does life itself become Suffering ; and only then does there enter into this Suffering the possibility of escape, the possibility of Ceasing, the possibility of Extinguishing—*Nibbana*.

“ Just as, ye monks, the ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt, so this Doctrine-discipline has only one taste, the taste of Deliverance ” (Udāna, p. 44).

It is only total and complete liability to Suffering, the total and complete carrying over of life into the Five Grasping-groups, which creates the possibility of Deliverance. “ And the Exalted One took up a tiny crumb of earth in his hand, and said to the monks : ‘ Not even so much as this, ye monks, permits of being attained of a self that would be permanent, lasting, eternal, unchangeable, thus, that might remain eternally the same. If, ye monks, only so much might permit of being attained of a self that would be permanent, lasting, eternal, unchangeable, eternally the same, then a possibility of a life of purity for the ending of all Suffering would not be discernible. But because, ye monks, not even so much as this permits of being attained of a self that would be permanent, lasting, eternal, unchangeable, eternally the same, therefore is a possibility of a life of purity for the ending of Suffering discernible ’ ” (Samyutta Nikāya III., 144).

This is the joyful message, the gospel which the Buddha has to proclaim to men. To the actual thinker it is really a strange evangel when someone comes and says : “ I declare to you eternal life ”. Of eternal life, beings assuredly will not fail ! What I call a joyful message is when one comes and says : “ Behold, I show you the path upon which you can win free from eternal life ! ” This path of escape the Buddha points out ; but he points it out only for him to whom life has become wholly and entirely Suffering, *i.e.* he points it out only to him who has understood, and who follows, him, the Buddha. He does not point out Ceasing simply ; he points out the Ceasing of Suffering. “ As of old, so also now I proclaim but one thing : Suffering and the Ceasing of Suffering ! ”

In the view of the ordinary person, Buddhism mostly passes for pessimism on the ground of its Doctrine of Suffering as set forth in the Four Noble Truths which I have called the entrance to the heart of Buddhism. But how mistaken is this view is at once made evident in the fact that this Doctrine of Suffering, when rightly understood, is also at the same time the Doctrine of the Ceasing of Suffering. An emotional judgment applies only where life and the understanding of life stand opposed to one another as object and concept. Where life itself has become the process of understanding, there the standard of measurement is lacking, measured by which an optimism or a pessimism can be made out of it ; nothing is left but a further self-development corresponding to its antecedent conditions.

For the actual thinker the difficulty of the Nibbana problem does not in the least reside in the

emotional, whether eternal bliss or eternal annihilation. The difficulty for him resides in the starting-point. Where lies the point of departure for the great change, for the transition from Grasping to the ceasing of Grasping, from nourishing to dis-nourishing, from upbuilding to unbuilding ?

In order that this process of growth may be carried on, what is needed is the impact of the Doctrine, through the Buddha. This impact of the Doctrine is the great gift which the Buddhas ever and again bestow, have bestowed, and will bestow, upon a world sunk in ignorance and suffering.

With this is given the answer to the question as to how this beginningless process of Grasping, life, can ever come to an end—how life, with its adequate cause, Ignorance, can ever become master over itself. It cannot do this in virtue of its own power of conceiving, which latter never produces a ceasing, but only a new setting to of life, like a ship trying to get ahead of its own bow-wave ; it can do this only in virtue of the stimulus to growth communicated by the Buddha's Teaching.

It is clear without further words that this answer is only a provisional one. Just as the answer, " God has created the world," is only a provisional answer inasmuch as it provokes the further question : " Who, then, has created God ? " so with the answer, " The transition from Ignorance to Knowledge is carried out through the impact of the Buddha's Teaching," there follows the further question : " Who, then, has communicated this impact of the Teaching to the Buddha ? Whence has the Buddha derived his knowledge ? Whence springs *Bodhi* ? "

With this, our exposition has reached what might be called *the* problem of Buddhism, upon which depends the evaluation of all the answers hitherto given. If to this question no satisfying answer is given, then therewith everything else becomes worthless—worthless, not in the sense of being worthless in itself, but worthless in this sense, that it would deprive Buddhism of its title to exist, and make of it merely a special instance of Faith.

## SIXTEENTH CHAPTER

### THE BUDDHA

IN order to understand how the Buddha arrived at his knowledge, one must try to get an understanding of the course of his development, and of the function which, as Buddha, he had to discharge.

*Buddha* means *The Awakened*. Thus the word is not an individual name, but a concept; and indeed a concept which has nothing whatever of the unique about it, as has, for instance, that associated with the concept of divine humanity embodied in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, by his nature, is a unique person. He is the mediating act between God, as cause in itself, and world, as effect in itself—a divine act of mediation, occurring but once, beyond all reach of reason, beyond all conceiving, a once-for-all great cleansing from sin of the world, of which one does not quite see the grounds, since this world, just as it is, has been created by this very same God who is cleansing it from sin.

The Buddha, by his nature, is not at all a something unique. The process of awakening has run its course in numberless Buddhas before this historical Buddha Gotama; and it will run its course in numberless Buddhas after him.

Grasped in purely conceptual fashion, the Buddha-knowledge, like everything else, may be interpreted equally well after the fashion of Faith, as after the fashion of Science. In the former case it would be a divine illumination, which, to be sure, here where it is not a question of belief in an eternal existence, but of the comprehending of non-selfness, and the final terminability of all existence, would assume an absurd, paralogical character. In the latter case it would be a special knowledge which is communicated by one Buddha to another. The series of Buddhas would be a series of light-bearers, wherein one, in elevated converse arising above the Kappas, would hand on the light of the Doctrine to another.

The present writer, to some extent misled by the views prevalent in Ceylon, himself for a long time shared such views. To-day I see that this particular view is wrong. Were it correct, the series of Buddhas would be nothing else but a special instance of the endless series of Science; and one could treat it according to the example of Science, *i.e.* remain exact, and leave it as an endless series in all its indecisiveness, or put a violent end to it.

The latter is what actually has happened in the cultural domain of Buddhism. Just as Science, when it seeks to construct a world-view, has to break off the endless series in some sort of primordial cell, primordial nebula, and so forth, so the Buddhism of Nepal has broken off the endless series of Buddhas in an *Adi-Buddha* (primordial Buddha), and thereby turned the whole of Buddhism into a special instance of Science.

The Buddha himself says of himself: "I have

no teacher (*na me ācariyo atthi*), and: "By myself have I known (*sayam abhiññāya*)! Whom should I acknowledge (as my teacher)?" (*Kam uddiseyyam?* Majjhima Nikāya 26). He calls himself *the* Teacher, the incomparable Teacher. If he had taken over his doctrine from other Buddhas, then, just like his Arāhans, he would have been a taught teacher. He himself, however, as well as his disciples, makes a decided distinction between himself and an Arahān.

"The Accomplished One (*tathāgato*), the Worthy of Veneration (*arahāṇi*), the Fully Awakened One (*sammāsambuddho*), through becoming weary of Form (Sensation, Perception, Tendings, Consciousness), through dispassion, through ceasing (*nirodho*), is delivered, free from attachment, and therefore is he called the Fully Awakened One. And also a monk that is delivered through Knowledge (*pañña-vimutto*), through becoming weary of Form (Sensation, Perception, Tendings, Consciousness) through dispassion, through ceasing, is delivered, free from attachment, and therefore is called one delivered through Knowledge. What now, ye monks, is the mark, the token, the distinction, between the Accomplished One and the monk delivered through Knowledge? The Accomplished One, ye monks, the Venerable One, the Fully Awakened One, is the creator of the unarisen way, the producer of the unproduced way, the proclaimer of the unproclaimed way, the knower of the way, the beholder of the way, the cogniser of the way. Way-followers, ye monks, are those hearers now; only later are they attained to possession. This, ye monks, is the mark, the token, the distinction between the

Accomplished One, the Venerable One, the Fully Awakened One, and the monk delivered through Knowledge" (Samyutta Nikāya III., 66).

The corresponding passage is to be found in the Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 108), where the Buddha's disciple Ananda says: "Not a single monk is wholly and entirely, in every respect, endowed with the properties wherewith he, the Exalted One, the Holy One, the Fully Awakened One, was endowed. It is verily he, the Exalted One, creator of the unarisen way, producer of the unproduced way, proclaimer of the unproclaimed way, understander of the way, knower of the way, cogniser of the way; but way-followers are the disciples at present, only later attained to possession."

Both, the present Buddha as well as his Arahans, are Delivered Ones, both have had to fight for their deliverance themselves "of themselves (*paccattam*)". But the Buddha alone is he who has himself created the way to Deliverance; while all his Arahans have only taken over this path already traced out by him. If that really is the case, then it is just deliverance for deliverance. And so it is understandable when the Buddha exhorts: "Be ye lights to yourselves (*attadīpā viharatha*)!" (Khandha Samyutta 43). In extinguishing itself, there are no distinctions. Whether a fire has risen originally through friction, or whether it has been kindled at another fire, makes no difference as regards its extinguishing.

Every Buddha resembles a fire that has arisen not through being kindled but originally through friction. In advance of every Buddha-hood goes the Bodhisatta-hood; every Buddha, before he



arrived at Awakening, has been a Bodhisatta. In the Suttas is repeatedly to be found the phrase: "Before my Full Awakening (*pubbe me sambodhā*), while yet I was not a Fully Awakened One (*an-āḥḥisambuddho*), as a Bodhisatta", and so on.

*Bodhisatta* means Bodhi-being, *i.e.* a being that by his disposition must come to Bodhi, in the same way that a certain definite seed must grow up into a certain definite plant. Bodhisatta-hood is the way by which every Buddha comes to Bodhi, to Buddha-knowledge. There is only one way of becoming master of oneself, and that is—Ceasing itself!

The Bodhisatta-hood, in its entirety, is nothing but a course of renunciation, of sacrifice, of giving, in its heights surpassing all description. It is—to use the Christian phrase—the road to Golgotha, which he, the Buddha, treads for the world of beings; after the completion of that journey, endowing it with his gift.

Giving, endurance, and renunciation,—these are the keys that open the portals of knowledge, of that alone which the Buddhist calls knowledge, the knowledge of Deliverance. "Be thou removed, thou motion of lust! Be thou removed, thou motion of ill-will! Be thou removed, thou motion of violence!" With these words, Gotama, at that time — unimaginable ages ago — living as King Mahāsudassana, entered upon the path of Bodhisatta-hood (*Dīgha Nikāya* 17). And out of ever-repeated acts of renunciation, surpassing all human measure, permeating the Kappas, there grows up in him the unique fruit, *the knowledge that all life is subject to ceasing*.

"Nibbana, Nibbana, it is said. But what is

Nibbana?—What there is of the Ceasing of Lust, of the Ceasing of Hate, of the Ceasing of Delusion, this is called Nibbana.—But is there a way, is there a path, to the realisation of this Nibbana?—There is a way, there is a path, to the realisation of this Nibbana.—And what is the way, what is the path, to the realisation of this Nibbana?—It is even the Noble Eightfold Path that is the way to the realisation of this Nibbana.” (Samyutta Nikāya IV., 252.)

The Eightfold Path is the way to Nibbana ; the Eightfold Path is the way to knowledge ; through the right treading of the Eightfold Path has Gotama the Buddha, and every Buddha before him, become the Buddha. The Eightfold Path is the way of renunciation ; not of renunciation pure and simple, but of renunciation that is guided by right insight. Discipline nourished by meditation, conduct guided by knowledge—this it is that leads to insight. Renunciation pure and simple is not enough ! That is merely a symptom, and may minister to fruitless asceticism. Knowledge pure and simple is not enough ; it may be a fruitless knowledge. I may know ever so exactly how far stretches the road to a certain goal, and in what direction it runs ; but all this knowledge is vain if I do not also travel this road. Only when knowledge and conduct, discipline and meditation, mutually support and strengthen each other, only when the Eightfold Path begins, only then does the goal draw nigh. “ Thus is discipline (*sīlam*) ; thus is meditation (*samādhi*) ; thus is wisdom (*paññā*). Meditation armoured with discipline brings much fruit, brings great reward ; wisdom armoured with meditation

brings much fruit, brings great reward. The mind armoured with wisdom is wholly and entirely freed from the 'Impulsions' " (Dīgha Nikāya 16).

In the interplay of knowledge and conduct, one is not before the other, one is not after the other, but the two constitute a single growth. As a man washes hand with hand, and foot with foot, so does knowledge strengthen conduct, and conduct knowledge. And as one hand has no precedence over the other, one foot no precedence over the other, so knowledge has no precedence over conduct, and conduct no precedence over knowledge, but the two constitute one single process of growth.

That Bodhi, the Buddha-knowledge, also is nothing but a process of growth—this every Buddha attests by his simple name in calling himself *Awakened One*.

Awakening requires neither a mental-metaphysical force, nor a mechanical-physical impulsion; it is nothing but a process of nutrition developing out of its own antecedent conditions.

I am very well aware of what I do here in speaking about this unique subject without myself having experienced anything of it. But I am not afraid of the venture; for it is not a question here of an awakening to any kind of incomprehensibility, but of an awakening to Actuality; and in Actuality we all have a share!

Bodhi is a process of growth just like all other Actuality, distinguished from all the others only by the extreme rarity of the process; and the cause of this, again, lies not in it, in the process itself, but in its antecedent conditions: the clear freedom from preconceived ideas, the unshakable patience,

the readiness for sacrifice regardless of all considerations, the surpassingly receptive capacity for Actuality.

Every Buddha speaks of himself as the Tathagata, the "thither arrived", the arrived at that final conclusion to which life by its own force can arrive—*deliverance from life!*

The idea of the Tathagata, of the perfected being who obtains his perfecting in the human state, is an inheritance from India; and this idea finds fulfilment in the fact of the Buddha ever and again springing from the soil of India.

The Buddha is the most precious, but also the rarest, flower that can spring up out of the swamp of Samsara; and only in endlessly long spaces of time does it happen that its time comes to culmination. The Buddhas are the measuring rod by which the Kappas are measured; and in Buddhahood, Samsara, the incomprehensibly beginningless, sends forth its greatest waves.

But not every Kappa has the good fortune to see a Buddha spring forth from its bosom! The Buddha tells of himself that he possessed the power of retrospective memory to the ninety-first Kappa, counting backward from the present one; and in this long series, as the fourteenth Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, the Mahapadana Sutta, tells us, only four Kappas were distinguished by the arising therein of a Buddha; and this present Kappa is called a fortunate Kappa (*bhadda-kappa*) because in it three Buddhas have appeared, of which the last is the historic Buddha Gotama.

Corresponding to the unexampled rarity of the process, the birth of a Buddha takes place to the

accompaniment of unexampled signs and portents, of which the Discourse on "Astonishing and Wonderful Things", the 123rd of the Majjhima Nikāya, gives details.

In the heaven of the Tusita gods the Bodhisatta of the period takes up his abode before he enters the blessed womb from which for the last time he is to come forth into the world, after a period of ten months' pregnancy being born of his mother in a standing position, as is the manner of a Buddha's birth (*dhammatā*). After coming forth from the womb, with face raised, he takes seven equal paces forward, and utters the weighty words: "I am the highest in the world! I am the first in the world! I am the leader of the world! This is the last birth; never more is there a re-birth." Such is the manner of the birth of a Buddha.

And over above this multi-coloured, deeply thought out garland of legends, the Buddha, he who understands all Actuality, breaks in with the fullness of his all-embracing humour: "And this also, Ananda, thou mayst well bear in mind as an astonishing, a wonderful characteristic of the Accomplished One: In the Accomplished One, Ananda, there consciously arise sensations; consciously are they present; consciously do they subside. Consciously arise perceptions; consciously are they present; consciously do they subside. This also, Ananda, thou mayst well bear in mind as an astonishing, a wonderful characteristic of the Accomplished One" (Majjhima Nikāya 123).

That with the Buddha it is a question of a process of growth, just as with all other Actuality, follows from the fact that here, as in all growth,

there are degrees, phases. There are *Fully Awakened Ones* (*sammāsambuddhā*), and *Not Fully*, or, *For Themselves Alone, Awakened Ones* (*pacceka-buddhā*). The former are awakened up to the last stage, the ability to make known the Doctrine to others. The latter are awakened also, but not to the final stage, the ability to make known the Doctrine to others. Of Pacceka Buddhas there may be many at the same time. Of Sammā Sambuddhas there is always only one in his particular era. The Loka-dhātu, the world, cannot bear two Sammā Sambuddhas at the same time.

Why is that? This is the law of Actuality; just as it is the law of Actuality that many plants can bear only *one* flower.

The Buddha, as the Tathagata, is the prototype of Actuality who, because himself become Actuality, no longer permits of any standard of measure by which he might be measured; not because he is immeasurable in himself, *i.e.* because he is an object of Faith, but because he is Actuality himself in its final possibility—Ceasing.

As such, the Tathagata is no personality in the ordinary sense of the word. He is one who has become the Doctrine (*dhamma-bhūto*); he is a process, a prototype of Actuality, in which all is lived out—the transition from beginningless Ignorance to Knowledge, from beginningless Suffering to Deliverance.

“All Form (Sensation, Perception, Tendings, Consciousness) wherewith one seeks to comprehend the Accomplished One, is by the Accomplished One done away, cut off at the root, made like a palm-tree stump, incapable of growing, incapable

of further springing up. From the concept of Form (Sensation, Perception, Tendencies, Consciousness) is the Accomplished One freed, being deep, immeasurable, unseizable" (Samyutta Nikāya IV., 376).

He is unseizable because he himself no longer seizes; ungraspable, because he himself no longer grasps; unknowable, because in him this knowing, the generating, the proliferating, has ceased. Whoso no longer knows the world in this ardent grasping, him also the world knows no more.

"Is there an eye wherewith one might discern the Buddhas of the past, the Extinguished, the Free from the Hindrances, the Free from Journeying, the Finally Attained to the Goal, the Escaped from all Suffering? Is there an ear (nose, tongue, body, thought) wherewith one might discern the Buddhas of the past, the Extinguished . . . the Escaped from all Suffering?" (Samyutta Nikāya IV., 52). And the answer runs: Such an eye, such an ear . . . there is not; not because the Buddha has entered into some metaphysical existence, but because he is that perfected being who has made out of life what, as a pure process of Grasping, *can* be made out of it—the total and complete ceasing of all Grasping, the coming to rest of the Sankharas, Cessation, Extinguishing.

No longer to know the world in ardour as the man knows the woman—this means, to know it as what in truth it is, nutrition, a thing that can cease.

"By the Accomplished One the world is fully known; sundered from the world is the Accomplished One. By the Accomplished One the arising of the world is fully known; by the Accomplished One the arising of the world is done away. By the

Accomplished One the passing away of the world is fully known ; by the Accomplished One the passing away of the world is fully realised. By the Accomplished One the path that leads to the passing away of the world is fully known ; by the Accomplished One the path that leads to the passing away of the world is unfolded.

“ What in the world, together with its gods, its Maras and Brahmas, together with the hosts of its ascetics and brahmins, together with its gods and men, is seen, heard, thought, known, conceived, investigated, pondered in mind—that by the Accomplished One is fully known. Therefore is he called the Accomplished One. And what between the night in which he was fully awakened, and the night in which he was fully extinguished, the Accomplished One preaches, speaks, expounds—all this is even thus, not otherwise. Therefore is he called the Accomplished One ” (Anguttara Nikāya II., 23).

Every moment of the events of the world has not been predetermined, is not determined, but determines itself through its inner antecedent conditions and its external circumstances, through its Kammic and non-Kammic movements, which latter may be cited as consisting of season, climate, environment, and so on (cf. Samyutta Nikāya IV., 230). A seed of grain may be ever so good ; but if it is trampled underfoot by the army columns of warring men, or dried up by the drought of an unpropitious sky, its development will be interfered with. World-event against individual fate !

Thus Kamma, individual action, individual destiny, stands in a state of constant strife with the



world-mass ; and ever and again the obscure question emerges as to those ultimate depths wherein world-event and individual destiny, cosmos and personality, coincide in one unity, and the longed-for harmony between world and fate is brought about.

All human thinking, when it is real thinking and not this dead routine in the combat with time and space that to-day we call thinking, has played with this idea, has pictured to itself a golden age wherein world-event and individual destiny coincide in final, fullest harmony. According to China's way of thinking, this harmony between man and nature prevailed in those days when the great, mythical emperors reigned, with their faces turned to the South, abiding in exalted motionlessness ; and all was guided through itself, heaven and man coinciding in one final harmony—of all nobilities, the noblest !

Indian thinking also has played with these ideas. How should it not, here where thinking has reached its deepest deeps, its greatest content of Actuality, and, correspondingly, Indian thought has gone beyond Chinese thought ? Alongside the mythical emperor, the *Cakkavatti*, the world-conqueror, who reconciles heaven with earth, and makes chaos and fate into a single cosmos that vibrates to one rhythm—I say, alongside the mythical emperor it has created the Tathagata, the thither attained, the perfect being who takes up the combat between Kamma and Samsara, between individual fate and world-event, and, waging it victoriously, issues from it as conqueror, as Jina.

“ So, friend, thou claimest to be the Holy One (*arahā*), the limitless conqueror (*anantajino*) ? ”

the naked ascetic Upaka asks of the Buddha, who replies: "Like me truly are the conquerors who have reached the ceasing of the Impulsions. The Evil One have I conquered, therefore am I conqueror" (Majjhima Nikāya 26).

Limitless conqueror is he who has brought to a standstill the limitlessness of the senses, the flame-like, and thereby is become master of the world; not in that most beautiful of all dreams, the dream of the Cakkavatti, the maker into one of man and heaven; but in the bitter actuality of renunciation which masters all in the ceasing of all. In the combat with the world, here at last man has remained victor; a beginningless destiny finally has come to rest.

"Cut off from the course of existence stands the body of the Accomplished One. So long as the body exists for him, so long shall gods and men behold him. Upon the dissolution of the body, after the ending of the term of life, neither gods nor men shall any more behold him. Just as, ye monks, in the case of a bunch of mangoes cut from off the stem, all the mangoes that in any way adhere to the stem follow along with it; even so, ye monks, cut off from the course of existence stands the body of the Accomplished One. So long as the body exists for him, so long shall gods and men behold him. Upon the dissolution of the body, after the ending of the term of life, neither gods nor men shall any more behold him" (Dīgha Nikāya I.).

They will behold him no more, not because he has entered upon some metaphysical existence, but because a beginningless process of Grasping has come to ceasing, because a beginningless state of tension has come to equilibrium.

## SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

### AVYĀKATAS AND DHĀTUS

IF, turning back to the title of this book, I try briefly to mark out the position which Buddhism occupies in the mental life of humanity, I would say that it is the religion of thoughtfulness, the only religion which resists the attractive force of the concepts that ever seek to draw men forward into the infinite. It is that religion which out of what is, makes what *can* be made out of it. For the man to whom, in a single peaceful period of rest from conceptual thinking, the secret of life does not reveal itself—to such a man all endeavours at comprehension will reveal nothing. In Buddhism also there are unrevealed things (*avyākātā*); but they are “unrevealed” not because they transcend the Buddha’s knowledge (*bodhi*), but because they spring from that false manner of envisaging things according to which the world is a conceptually determined something. All such questions as: Is the world infinite in space and time? Are life and body the same or different? Does the Tathagata exist after death, or does he not so exist? and so on, spring from a wrong way of thinking, are questions which are wrongly put, and require no other answer save proper instruction.

All these questions refer to the Tathagata as a personality. But any such something to which such questions might apply is not at all to be found. Here there is nothing but the process of the ceasing of beginningless putting-together.

“To one who does not cognise, does not look upon, Form (Sensation, Perception, Tendings, Consciousness) according to Actuality, does not cognise, does not look upon, the Arising, the Passing away, and the Path that leads to the passing away, of Form [and so on] according to Actuality—to such an one comes the thought: ‘Does the Tathagata exist after death?’ [and so on].” On the other hand: “To one who does cognise Form [and so on] according to Actuality, who does cognise the Arising of Form [and so on] according to Actuality, who does cognise the passing away of Form [and so on] according to Actuality, and who does cognise the Path that leads to the passing away of Form [and so on] according to Actuality—to such an one the thought does not come: ‘Does the Tathagata exist after death?’ [and so on]” (Samyutta Nikāya IV., pp. 386, 387).

It is clear without further words that out of this an all-embracing poverty of mental life must follow. All the riches of the mental life, the noble elevation of its idealism, the surprising results achieved in the war with time and space, are based upon the idea that between me and the world there exists room for conceptual free play which permits me conceptual activity with regard to the world.

All conceptual activity demands definitely circumscribed things, identities, somethings, of which one can say: This is this, that is that! If this is

this, then it is not that! In short: All mental life, in the ordinary sense of the words, makes use of the law of identity on one hand, and of contradiction on the other. These constitute the pre-condition and basic foundation of all mental life, so far as it is not Buddhism. In order to be able to conceive, one must have something conceived, *i.e.* something identical with itself, and different from other things. If then, in incomprehensible correlation with the conceived there results the unconceived, one speaks of the natural limitations which are for ever set to all thinking, and makes up one's mind to leave everything in suspense, *i.e.* to dabble in science; or else to believe everything, and recognise a reason that is higher than all human reason, for which all these incomprehensibilities are not incomprehensible.

"These two ends overcoming, the Accomplished One shows in the middle the Doctrine." That means: He shows that this ending in incomprehensibility has its sufficient reason simply in Ignorance.

For Buddhism there is no law of identity and of contradiction; that is to say, there is for it no logic in the ordinary sense, as a method of procedure which, starting from a certain given standpoint, makes ever nearer approaches to a certain goal of knowledge. For it, however, there also is not the motionless all-unity of an undifferentiated being in which the existence of distinctions is only an appearance, a delusion or error, removable by a mere act of cognition. There exist distinctions, but they are only such distinctions as exist between eating and food.

The Buddha, too, says: "If that is, this is;

if that is not, then this is not (*imasmim sati idam hoti ; imasmim asati, idam na hoti*). But thereby he does not mean something which underlies the law of identity and contradiction, but processes of nutrition which put to confusion all possibilities of identity, as of contradiction. How shall one continue to speak of logical purity where hammer does not remain hammer, anvil does not remain anvil ; and the spark yielded by the impact of the two does not remain spark, but all intertwines with all in a mass of processes of nutrition whose several phases do not carry their names upon themselves as fixed labels, but ever experience themselves according to the standpoint, and according to the time, of their occurring.

Buddhism, envisaged within the mental life of humanity, is—to adopt a phrase from the Christian Bible—to the Scientist a stumbling-block, and to the Believer a rock of offence ; and both of them, once they have seen the necessity of coming to an understanding with it, will either try to interpret it in their own sense, *i.e.* introduce “ sense and meaning ” into it, or cast it out as an intolerable disturber of the peace !

What is the use of all mental life if it no longer may exert itself in the endeavour to comprehend, if it can no longer be supported by hopes, be fortified by successes, if it no longer can wrestle for the Whole as the bridegroom wrestles for the bride ; if nothing more remains to it but that last action which leads to the ceasing of all action ? How can such a doctrine claim the right to exist if it takes away from mental life everything whereby up till now it has stood forth rich and great ?

I reply : Buddhism not only takes away ; but it has the right to take away, since it provides a substitute, an irreplaceable substitute, for what is so taken : that uniform Actuality wherein thinking no longer meets with any resistance, because everywhere, in all things (*sabbadhi sabbattatāya*), recognising itself !

If Buddhism, through its Doctrine, gave only a segment of Actuality, a world-view sufficient only for its own use, then it were the most limited of all limited things, to be dismissed with the label "egoistic". But Buddhism does not give only a segment of Actuality, but by teaching me to comprehend myself, it also teaches me to comprehend the world.

Formally, Buddhism gives the uniformity of the world-mass in the doctrine of the *Dhātus*, of the Modes ; and with this there opens out that grand prospect which gives Actuality in its objective, as well as in its subjective, form.

Antiquity (since Empedokles), and we along with it, distinguished, and distinguish, four fundamental materials, elements, earth, water, air, and fire. And the uninstructed men of the world lull themselves with the idea that earth actually is earth itself, water actually water itself, and so on. In short : They lull themselves with the idea that with these elements they have reached the ingredients out of which the innumerable magnitudes which Actuality offers are put together.

This is the grand error of errors, that people imagine they have attained to the firm ground of Actuality, whereas in reality one is hurrying on over the swaying network of the lianas which only bear

one up on condition that one never relies on them but hastily leaps on farther before they give way under the feet of the leaper.

Earth, water, fire, air, for the Buddhist, *i.e.* for the actual thinker, are not the fundamental materials themselves in which Actuality unveils itself to us in its foundation- and supporting-strata, but they are *Dhātus*, Modes, *i.e.* the different modes of action in which Actuality reveals itself. Earth is not earth in the gross material sense as Actuality itself ; but it is a mode of action, a Mode wherein Actuality—which by its very nature is nothing else but action—comprehends itself. In the same way, water is another mode of action wherein Actuality reveals itself ; and fire and air are equally modes of action wherein Actuality reveals itself. And the *Dhātus* are modes of preparations of Actuality.

How far the domain of the several *Dhātus* extends, upon this point the Buddha teaches nothing. Earth, water, fire, air, space, consciousness, are not fixed facts but modes of life. Just as one cannot say of a source of light that it reaches to this or to that point, so also one cannot say of the consciousness that its dominion extends thus far or that far. Upon the extent of the domain of the Consciousness-mode (of the *Viññānadhātu*) the Buddha has taught nothing definite in the way of knowledge. In other words, he has taught nothing as to how far within the domain of Actuality extends the possibility of re-birth. Debate is made as to whether a man can be re-born also as a plant, or even as a stone. But these are idle disputations. Just as the Fire-mode, the flame, as regards its field of grasping cannot be determined in the way of knowledge, but yet on



that account is not indeterminable, but determines itself inasmuch as it extends as far as combustible materials extend, so the Consciousness-mode, as regards the extent of its dominion, cannot be determined in the way of knowledge, but yet is not on that account indeterminable, but determines itself inasmuch as it extends as far as extends what corresponds to consciousness—the *capacity of suffering*. How far this extends in individual cases does not permit of being measured by way of mere knowing. By way of living experience it is measured in the experience, *Compassion*.

From the purely conceptual standpoint it may be objected : “ The plant also is life, consequently you Buddhists also kill, inasmuch as you take plant nourishment ”. But it all depends upon whether one is dealing with life that is capable of feeling pain. How far extends this life that can feel pain—this I know within myself in the experience of compassion. He in whom compassion has become so pathologically refined that he also feels compassion for plants, must himself take the consequences of his pathological condition, as every other sick man also must. And he in whom compassion is so pathologically absent that he feels no compassion even for living creatures that can feel pain, here also must take upon himself the consequences of his pathological condition. Suffering depends upon consciousness. Without consciousness, no suffering ! And in the ultimate, the fact “ compassion ” is nothing but an attuning of consciousness to consciousness in accord with Actuality. Consciousness scents out consciousness ; and what is experienced as “ compassion ” is this fellow-consciousness,

wherein consciousness encounters the great solidarity of the whole of the Consciousness-mode.

In compassion, the capacity for suffering is extended into the unmeasured, as, alike therein, consciousness as fellow-consciousness is extended into the unmeasured. Boundless as space does consciousness become in compassion. In compassion the cosmos, the Whole, the Samsara, grasps at its sacrifice. Compassion is its most effective instrument for fettering to the Whole the conscious living being to whom, with the fact, consciousness, is shown the door out of Samsara, the possibility of escape. Compassion is the strongest, most natural impulse of nature wherein the possibility of unbinding from the Whole is transformed into an act of conscious self-binding to the Whole.

Compassion must become what in truth it is, the expression *through understanding* of the solidarity of all consciousness in fellow-consciousness. But so long as it remains a mere matter of feeling, it will never cease to fetter me, the living being, ever and again to the Whole, and make my first and most natural duty my pertaining to the Whole.

“ Out of compassion ” the Buddha entered upon his teaching activity ; “ out of compassion ” he offers his great gift ; not out of compassion in the emotional sense, however, but out of compassion in the form of this clear, calm insight into the solidarity of all consciousness which at the same time is the withdrawing from this solidarity. The oft-heard and oft-repeated objection : “ In showing the doctrine out of compassion, the Buddha again fetters himself to the world ”, has no solid foundation. Just as suffering recognised is also the ceasing of

suffering, so compassion recognised is also the ceasing of compassion as a mere emotion. The emotional disappears, and nothing here remains but this cool, clear sensing of consciousness by consciousness which, in order that it may experience the solidarity of all consciousness, also at the same time experiences the particularity and the separation.

In the Udāna there is a Sutta in which we are told of the Buddha sitting by night with a light before him, while numbers of nocturnal insects, attracted by the light, approach it and are burnt miserably. From the standpoint of merely emotional compassion, the Sutta ought to go on to tell us that, out of compassion for the insects, the Buddha blows out the light. But we are told nothing of the kind. The Buddha merely says: "Just as these insects of the night are burnt up in this flame, so are beings burnt up in the fires of Lust, and Hate, and Delusion". Such is the difference between compassion in the vulgar, emotional sense and compassion as higher understanding.

Feelings unite, thinking separates. Certainly there exists a great, unique solidarity of all that lives which, boundless, spreads over boundless space. But to recognise this unity means to separate oneself from it, just as the insight into the all-unity of eating is also the insight into separation.

Henceforth there is an end of the question, "Will it be thus? Will it be so?" Henceforth there is an end of the wisdom of "Sibyls and Prophets", of astrologers and casters of horoscopes; these are all the miscomprehensions of idlers, or of people tormented by life. There are no attunements, neither between present and present, nor between

present and future. There is only this ever-repeated self-attunement between eating and food, which extends as far as it can extend—a beginningless business of mutuality, a beginningless mutual understanding, a beginningless answering to each other, as the man answers to the woman, as the Lingam to the Yoni. And this is what is meant by the word Vibhajja-vādi, the maker of distinctions. Life and its fate is no affair of mere knowledge, no determinable thing pursuing its course on a basis of logic and deductions ; yet it is also no undeterminable thing lying in the bosom of the divine counsels. But it is the process of ever-repeated new self-determining out of its own antecedent conditions.

This play of mysterious mutual understanding,—this is Mara the Evil One, Nature feigning to be the natural, which gives life through death, lies the truth, and offers beings freedom as a means to putting themselves in bonds. *Pāpima Māra* is that world outside there, which with its allurements and pollutions presses in upon me. And Mara also is the world of the Five Grasping-groups, as the summation of the Hindrances which hinder me from attaining Nibbana.

“ To entertain delusions, O monk, is the fetter of Mara. No more to entertain delusions means to be freed from the Evil One. To entertain delusions in respect of Form (Sensation, Perception, Tendencies, Consciousness), is the fetter of Mara. No more to entertain delusions in respect of Form (Sensation, Perception, Tendencies, Consciousness), is to be freed from the Evil One ” (Khandha Samyutta 64, Samyutta Nikāya III., 75).

“ Mara, Mara, it is said, Lord ? But in how far

is there Mara, and the play of Mara?—Where the eye (ear, nose, tongue, body, thinking) is present, where forms (sounds, smells, tastes, touches, things) are present, where eye-consciousness (ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, thought-consciousness) are present, where things cognisable in seeing (hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking) are present—there is Mara and the play of Mara” (Samyutta Nikāya IV., pp. 38, 39).

“All the pleasures of this life, all the pleasures of the other life, all the thoughts of pleasure of this life, all the thoughts of pleasure of the other life—all this is Mara’s realm, this is Mara’s play, this is Mara’s feeding-place, this is Mara’s pasture-ground” (Majjhima Nikāya 106).

And this beginningless play of Mara is spoiled for him only by *one*, the Tathagata, the Accomplished One, and whomsoever is taught by him. “He has blinded Death, utterly killed out the eye of Death, he is gone out of sight of the Evil One. Escaped is he from cleaving to the world. He goes assured, he stands assured, he sits down assured; assured does he choose his couch for the night. And why so? No more, ye monks, is he under the dominion of the Evil One” (Majjhima Nikāya 26).

With this I conclude this chapter, and the whole book, adding only a few general remarks.

Buddhism stands at the gate of all the mental life of all times, threatening and alluring, destroyer and fulfiller in one, bearing in its hands the *one* gift, this thing “not astonishing and yet never heard before”, *Actuality*.

With this *one* gift which gives all and takes all, it stands to-day also at the door of our mental life

with a message that rises to the immeasurable, of whose immeasurability the Buddha himself was aware in advance when he called the Dhâmma the " Doctrine for gods and men ", for all beings ; the which doctrine, to-day, however, as said, has become actual because mental life, from the phase of being concerned with one single group, the inhabitants of Holy India, in which it flourished at the time of the Buddha, has grown up to the phase of the community of the whole world.

To-day it is not a matter of a Holy India, or of the thrice sacred Middle Kingdom therein ; to-day it is a matter of the whole earth. And this fact alone brings it about that to-day every religion which bears within itself the seed of a world-religion aims at the Whole, becomes a Catholicism.

Catholicism means completeness. The particular religious form of completeness which is called by that name is well known. In contradistinction to this Catholicism stands the scientific form of completeness, the mechanical-materialistic theory of the world, the which, however, in the last analysis, is only the quartermaster and stirrup-holder of religious Catholicism.

Only with exact science and the working out of its concepts do the lines of Faith stand out with that sharpness which a mixture with Actuality after the fashion of Pantheism, or of antique polytheism, or heathen fetishism, no longer allows. One asks oneself with some hesitation : What is it that puts most difficulties in the way of Buddhism to-day ? Is it natural science, and a way of thinking or a faith, forced by it into the shafts of " logic-ism " ? I reply : The main hindrance is natural science

with its clumsy-exact mode of thinking which allows nothing to hold good but mass and motion ; and time and space as the vessel in which these run their course. But on that account the battle, if it ever should come to that, will not be waged between natural science and Buddhism, but between Catholicism and Buddhism, between Rome and Uruvela, both embracing Actuality as a whole, only, the one in the primary duty of binding oneself, the other in the ultimate right to unbind.

In the question as to how a time, an age, an epoch, will receive Buddhism, this is always the decisive factor—how strong in such an epoch is the craving to bind oneself, how far such an epoch has developed the art of idealising the will to life, the will to will.

In this art our era has developed to a perhaps hitherto unattained height. There is seeking and searching in every nook and corner, seeking by oneself, and seeking in troops and companies. But what is sought is life, enrichment of life, intensification of life ; and so the stream rushes on as one single, great hymn of praise to life, to its unshakability, to its natural title to exist.

What can Buddhism do here ? It can only keep silence, and wait patiently till those who are disgusted with the confused turmoil come to it as actual seekers and questioners. Not as a Catholicism that seeks to embrace all, but as a Catholicism of the elect—thus does the Buddha stretch out over the world of beings his net woven of the Doctrine, the indestructible, offering his gift in all places wherever it may be desired.

This is not the place to picture a world in which,

instead of modern freethought with its dogmas, of modern capitalism with its poverty, of modern philanthropy with its inhumanity, there reigns the Buddhist doctrine of Actuality. I can only say that the transformation would be impossible and unthinkable if Buddhism were not itself a matter of growth. What here is possible, what here is impossible—this does not permit of being determined in any conceptual manner. Growth experiences its possibilities for itself. And he only who experiences this growth within himself, he only will also experience that “not in vain will be the labour, not all fruitless be the toil”. For right thinking it is never too early ; for right thinking it is never too late ; for right thinking it is never the unfitting time.

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